



THE DECISION TO AID RUSSIA, 1941

Foreign Policy and Domestic Politics

By

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Introduction

PRESIDENT FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT announced on November 7, 1941, "I have today found the defense of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics vital to the defense of the United States." He thereupon directed the Office of Lend-Lease Administration to make every effort to supply military and economic aid to the Soviet Union. To implement the program the President authorized the immediate allocation of one billion dollars from funds appropriated by Congress for lend-lease operations. This is a study of the making of that decision to assist Soviet Russia in its war against Nazi Germany.

The over-all research design of this study is to point out the broader international and security factors and problems in 1941 which were dominant in shaping U.S. policy vis-à-vis the Soviet Union and, at the same time, to indicate the domestic political factors involved in the formulation of this policy. The main force of the research has been directed toward three major purposes: (1) to describe the process of policy-making which resulted in the decision to extend lend-lease aid to Soviet Russia; (2) to show the relation of this series of decisions concerning policy toward the Soviet Union to the broader complex of foreign policy problems which simultaneously confronted U.S. officials; and (3) to relate the decision to supply aid to the Soviet Union to the climate of public opinion within which the policy-makers acted. The analytical focus of the study is on the mutual interaction of foreign policy and national politics, emphasizing that these two elements in the totality of the political process form a continuum and that neither can be adequately understood in isolation.

This reciprocal impact of domestic and international factors is certainly not advanced here as a novel idea. It is believed, however, that the ensu-

ing pages will emphasize the necessity for making explicit these interactions of national and international factors if the processes of foreign policy-making are to be seen in proper perspective. This study of one instance of policy-making, for example, suggests that the decision to aid Russia in 1941 represented the shaping of foreign policy along lines relatively less controversial than were offered by the alternatives to assisting Russia. It suggests that, despite the long background of Soviet-American ill will and ideological antipathy, the domestic political liabilities of a *rapprochement* with Communist Russia were less hazardous than those implicit in other lines of action left open to U.S. policy-makers in the situation created by the German attack upon the U.S.S.R. on June 22, 1941.

This American decision to aid Russia was one of great significance in the grand strategy of the allied powers in World War II. The presidential directive in November came less than five months after Nazi Germany began its fateful invasion of the U.S.S.R. and preceded by one month the formal entry of the U.S. into the war. The directive represented the formal findings required under the Lend-Lease Act of March 11, 1941, to entitle a foreign power to receive American assistance under the provisions of that historic statute and thereby inaugurated a gigantic program of war-time aid to the Soviet Union. By September 30, 1945, the U.S. had shipped to Russia 17,499,861 long tons of cargo. Measured in dollars, the value of this prodigious quantity of freight reached a total of \$9.5 billions.

The organization of this study of that decision proceeds along the lines of a chronological-topical treatment. Since the basic policy represented by the Lend-Lease Act provides the framework in which the events described took place, the opening pages are devoted to a brief description of that act and the complex of national goals and interests which it was designed to protect and promote. The executive formulation of lend-lease and the legislative debates on the bill are then examined with specific reference to U.S. relations with the Soviet Union. Thereafter the development of U.S. policy toward the U.S.S.R. is traced down to the German invasion of June 22. The remainder of the work constitutes an effort to probe the process of policy determination from June 22 to November 7 and to describe the climate of opinion within which the policy decisions were reached. It is organized around three phases or periods of policy formation. The first phase encompasses the period from June 22 to the Hopkins mission to Moscow at the end of July; the second, the period from the Hopkins mission to the convening of the Moscow Supply Conference of September 28 to October 2; and the third, the Moscow Conference agreements and the resultant decisions in Washington during

October and early November. Around each of these critical junctures of policy formation, attention is focused on the actions and attitudes of the President, the White House staff, the Department of State, the military establishment, the Cabinet and Congress, all as units of policy-making; and the climate of opinion within which these policy-makers acted is examined.

This interest in probing the impact of opinion upon the policy-making process rests, first, upon the general hypothesis that, like all political decisions, those pertaining to foreign policy are in some measure influenced by the way the decision-makers interpret the climate of opinion within which they are operating. This study of U.S.-Soviet relations rests upon the specific hypothesis that the question of supplying aid to the Soviet Union posed issues that touched upon many sensitive nerves in the body politic. The circumspection and caution with which the policy-makers moved is in fact inexplicable if not studied in relationship to the climate of American opinion that the Russo-German war produced.

Because of the rather elusive and nebulous nature of any notion of the "climate of opinion," a brief statement of the approach used in this study to describe and analyze this phenomenon is necessary at the outset. The research has concentrated, first upon an exploration of that segment of the population which is properly spoken of as the *elite* and *attentive* publics—those individuals and groups who keep themselves informed on the leading issues arising in the foreign policy area and who compete in the advocacy of their foreign policy views.¹ This segment includes the great foreign policy interest groups which were so prominent on the American political landscape in 1941, a time when foreign policy dominated over all other public questions. It includes also the mass media of communication. Finally, it includes those individuals who, as members of private interest groups or in their personal capacities, are looked upon for various reasons as leaders of public opinion. Accordingly, in analyzing the opinions of the elite and attentive publics the research has drawn upon the pronouncements of the major interest groups concerned; upon the editorial positions of some twenty major newspapers, selected on the basis of obtaining a sampling of diverse foreign policy viewpoints and political attitudes and with the secondary object of having a rather broad geographical distribution; upon the articles of several nationally syndicated columnists; upon articles and editorials in fifteen national periodicals; and

1. On this point see especially Gabriel Almond, *The American People and Foreign Policy* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1950), pp. 136-43. Also valuable is the discussion in Richard C. Snyder and Edgar S. Furniss, Jr., *American Foreign Policy: Formulation, Principles, and Programs* (New York: Rinehart and Co., 1954), pp. 523 ff.

upon the statements of prominent individuals in private life—educators, clergymen, former political office-holders, those properly regarded as community leaders. Because of their peculiar significance to the problems here under consideration, separate treatment is given in most sections of the following chapters to the religious and moral issues provoked by the Russian war. Expressions of opinion on the part of the clergy, the viewpoints of ecclesiastical publications, though properly a part of the elite public, are thus singled out for separate analysis.

Next, the research has been directed toward an analysis of the attitudes of the *general* public toward the policy problems raised by the outbreak of the Russo-German war. In part the analysis is based upon interpretations offered at the time by the press and other observers of public opinion, but primarily it utilizes the data available from public opinion polls conducted during the period encompassed by the study.

Finally, in concluding this statement of the approach followed in the study of public opinion, a word is in order on the treatment of Congress as a factor in the climate of opinion. It is commonplace to observe that official opinion and public opinion are mutually interacting forces. Officials both reflect and lead in the formulation of public opinion. It seems logical and necessary, however, to place a line of demarcation between the public, both elite and general, and the *policy-making* elite, although both will reflect what is termed the climate of opinion and both are constituent parts thereof. The procedure that has been followed here is to treat the general remarks made "for the record" and the public addresses of the members of Congress delivered off the floor of the legislative chambers and outside the committee rooms as manifestations of the role of Congress as a segment of the elite foreign policy public—a uniquely important segment. When the members of the legislative branch are engaged in systematic debates or committee deliberations, within their official capacities, in matters impinging upon the policy problems herein under consideration, they are treated as participants in the policy-making process, rather than as merely seeking to influence policy.

This two-fold treatment of the legislative branch seems justifiable on two grounds. First, in the realm of foreign policy the initiative ordinarily is outside the hands of Congress. The day-by-day decisions that had to be made on problems arising out of the war in Russia were the prerogatives of the executive branch. A second ground for this treatment arises from the nature of the problem under study. The basic policy question under consideration was whether the U.S. should offer material assistance to the U.S.S.R. and, if so, on what terms and under what condi-

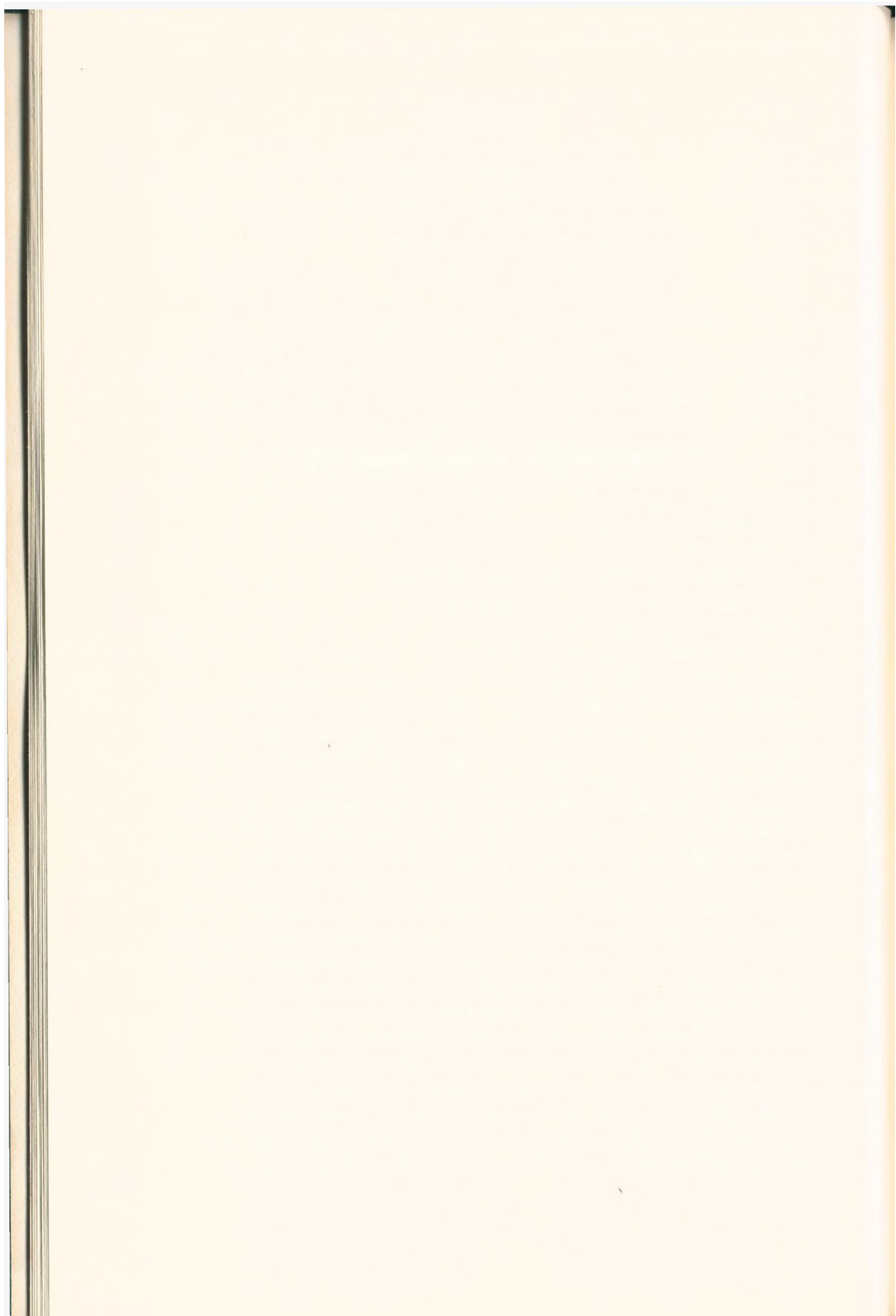
tions. The basic decision as to what nations were eligible for lend-lease aid from the U.S. had been delegated by Congress to the President in the Act of March 11, 1941. While Congress might have recalled that delegation, or have abrogated it with respect to the U.S.S.R., or have used its control over the appropriation of funds to influence executive action, in the absence of any such step it had transferred to the President this power of decision.

The emphasis given in this introductory statement to the problem of public opinion is not intended to assign undue significance to this aspect of the political process. One cannot but be impressed, particularly in the realm of foreign policy, by the degree to which the decision makers are prisoners, as it were, of events and circumstances which are beyond their sphere of influence or control. In the most fundamental sense U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union during the period from June through November of 1941 was shaped by the course of battle on the Russian front—where the armed forces of Russia and Germany and the existing war-making power of those two belligerents were the controlling elements. But in the situation which emerged, and in the area of maneuverability which events left for American officials, it seems obvious that their actions are better analyzed and understood if one is cognizant of the dominant trends in public opinion that then existed.

The portions of the study which deal with the development of policy decisions are drawn largely from the public documents which have been published or otherwise made available. A tremendous amount of the documentation for this period remains under classification, but the essential features of the policy process seem adequately presented in the available source materials. In addition to these sources, the research has drawn upon the more pertinent of that vast body of memoirs, personal papers, and official histories of the years of the Second World War which relate to the subject of U.S.-Soviet relations. These provided invaluable supplements to the available government documents and, in some instances, fill the voids left by continued classification. Some personal interviews were held with participants in the events recounted, but the individuals consulted generally felt unable to add much to the available records. Finally, of course, various monographs and general works have been consulted.



The Decision to Aid Russia, 1941



I.

Lend-Lease as a Foreign Policy Framework

THE EVOLUTION of the lend-lease policy and the historic "great debate" which it precipitated during the opening months of 1941 constitute one of the great milestones in the history of U.S. foreign policy. Sir Winston Churchill has spoken of it as one of the "Great Climacterics" of the Second World War and "the most unsordid act in the history of any nation."¹ In the turbulent years of the past two decades the extraordinary characteristics of the Lend-Lease Act have rather fallen into the shadows of semi-obscurity, partially concealed by such memorable policy decisions of more recent years as the Marshall Plan, the North Atlantic Treaty, and the Korean intervention. Yet it was certainly no exaggeration when the authors of the official history of the lend-lease program asserted that it delegated to the President "the greatest powers ever granted the Chief Executive in American history."² Nor was Cordell Hull engaging in overstatement when he termed it "one of the most revolutionary legislative actions" ever taken by the American Congress.³

A detailed account of the development of lend-lease as a basic policy decision lies beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, it is essential to narrate the mainsprings of this dramatic American departure from the pathways of isolationism, as well as to describe the general operating techniques of the program during its early months, before undertaking an analysis of the decision to aid Soviet Russia in 1941. For here, in the Lend-Lease Act, its supporting appropriations and administrative mechanism, and in its basic policy orientation were the fundamental decisions that provided the framework in which the decision to aid the U.S.S.R. would take place.

1. *Their Finest Hour* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1949), p. 569.

2. Department of State, Office of Foreign Liquidation Commissioner, *History of Lend-Lease*, MS, Pt. One, II, 187.

3. *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1948), II, 925.

The months of May and June, 1940, remain among the most somber moments of the twentieth century. German armed might had overwhelmed the Low Countries, driven the British Expeditionary Forces from the Continent, and had sealed the doom of the French Republic. In the midst of this grave crisis, the President delivered an address at Charlottesville, Virginia, on June 10. Here he made what Langer and Gleason have termed the "great commitment,"⁴ and here can be discerned the moral commitment which was to eventuate in lend-lease within several months.

Defining what American policy would be in that time of peril, the President made the categorical assertion that "we will extend to the opponents of force the material resources of this nation." Already, of course, in the decision to repeal the arms embargo provision of the Neutrality Act in November, 1939, the U.S. had partially committed itself to a policy of aid to the Allies.⁵ But the Charlottesville declaration explicitly translated this into official policy and defined it in unqualified and unequivocal terms.

From this declaration of purpose to a tangible, concrete implementation of policy there lay a long and hazardous pathway. The American public deeply sensed the urgency of the crisis during the summer of 1940 and was profoundly shaken by the fall of France.⁶ But the spirit of isolationism was far from dead, and its oracles were numerous and powerful. Moreover, the President faced in that summer and fall an unprecedented quest for a third term. Throughout the remaining months of 1940 the program of aid to "the opponents of force"—Britain, primarily—continued in the restrictive confines of what Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau characterized as the "cash-on-the-barrel-head" era, as prescribed by the cash-and-carry provisions of the amended Neutrality Act.⁷ Little effort was made by the President during 1940 to go beyond this bare minimum achieved in the repeal of the mandatory arms embargo contained in the original neutrality statute. The efforts to aid the Allies after the Dunkirk debacle were left to rest upon little more than improvisations and expediences, instead of firm statutory and

4. William L. Langer and S. Everett Gleason, *The Challenge to Isolation* (New York: Harper and Brothers and the Council on Foreign Relations, 1952), p. 503.

5. See John C. Donovan, "Congressional Isolationists and the Roosevelt Foreign Policy," *World Politics*, III (1951), 305-7, for an analysis of the embargo repeal in this connection.

6. A graphic discussion of the state of this public opinion is in Langer and Gleason, *The Challenge to Isolation*, especially at pp. 505-8.

7. For a convenient analysis of that statute, as amended, see Philip C. Jessup, "The Neutrality Act of 1939," *American Journal of International Law*, XXXIV (1940), 95-99.

financial foundations. The sales of munitions to Britain which began in that ominous June were arranged under rulings, made by the Attorney-General, which authorized the military establishment to sell surplus or obsolescent stores to private concerns. The private agent was then free to sell them to a friendly foreign power, even to a belligerent under the rulings made. Accordingly, the President directed that an intensive search be made for "surplus" armaments among the woefully inadequate American stores, and the first such sale was concluded by the War Department through the U.S. Steel Export Corporation on June 11. The principal items included 500,000 Enfield rifles with 129,140,708 rounds of ammunition; 80,583 machine guns of various types; 316 3-inch mortars; 20,000 revolvers; 25,000 Browning automatic rifles; and 895 75-mm. guns with 1,000,000 rounds of ammunition. On the same day U.S. Steel re-sold the "surplus" arms to the British government at the same purchase price of \$37,619,556.⁸

The President, for his temporizing and evident disposition to leave the aid program suspended on improvisations, received no little criticism from ardent supporters of the Allied cause in and out of government circles, while his opponents almost daily reiterated the charge that his policies were reckless and warlike.

Congress was generally disposed to go along with this improvised program of "cash-and-carry" aid, but it displayed a distinct suspicion that the President might lean too far in the direction of generosity and might become too deeply involved with the British war effort. Early that same June the Senate went on record by a vote of sixty-seven to eighteen as favoring the sale of surplus or obsolete stocks, but its Foreign Relations Committee summarily rejected two resolutions offered by Claude Pepper that would have endorsed the immediate sale of the latest type of aircraft. In passing a naval expansion bill later that month, Congress accepted an amendment moved by isolationist Senator David Walsh which forcefully called to the President's attention the temper of his critics and their distrust of his policies. This Walsh amendment stipulated that military and naval supplies thereafter to be "transferred, sold, exchanged, or otherwise disposed of" would have first to be certified by the Chief of Staff or the Chief of Naval Operations as "not

8. Richard M. Leighton and Robert W. Coakley, *Global Logistics and Strategy, 1940-1943* (Washington: Department of the Army, 1955), pp. 32-33; and Mark S. Watson, *Chief of Staff: Prewar Plans and Preparations* (Washington: Department of the Army, 1950), pp. 309-12. Harry Woodring, then Secretary of War, strongly opposed such sales as a violation of the neutrality legislation, but he was overruled by the President. On Attorney-General Jackson's rulings on the sales, arranged on the basis of a 1919 statute, see Frank L. Kluckhohn, *New York Times*, June 6, 1940, p. 1.

essential to the defense of the United States." The War and Navy departments were to inform Congress of such transfers and certifications immediately, by notifying the chairmen of the Military and Naval Affairs committees.⁹

All political considerations aside, the President had also to reckon with deep misgivings within the highest echelons of the military establishment concerning his policies in those weeks of crisis. For as the Allies were engulfed by a tidal wave of disaster in Western Europe, the military planners of the U.S., keenly aware of the low estate of American armed strength, expressed serious doubts and fears as to the wisdom of sending weapons and supplies to Britain.

The War Plans Division of the General Staff submitted a memorandum to the Chief of Staff on May 20, 1940, stating that future policy should rest on the assumption that the Allies were defeated and that no commitments should be made outside the Western Hemisphere. This memorandum was the subject of a discussion at the White House that same day. Under-Secretary of State Welles concurred in its conclusions, but the President and the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Stark, were not prepared to go that far. A month later the Army-Navy Joint Planning Committee issued a document similar in content, expressing doubt that Britain could "continue to be an active belligerent" for six months longer. As Major-General Strong of the War Plans Division had stated in a memorandum of June 17, the military planners recognized the "probability that we are next on the list of the Axis Powers."¹⁰ It is understandable that these authorities, deeply conscious as they were that the defense of the U.S. was their first and overriding duty, should have harbored profound misgivings concerning the transfer of scarce munitions to England. Major Walter Bedell Smith, Assistant Secretary of the General Staff, bluntly but informally warned the President's military aide of the doubts of G-4 and the War Plans Division on the transfer of 75-mm. guns, calling it "dangerous to the national defense." Major Smith further stated that "if we were required to mobilize after having released guns necessary for this mobilization and were found to be short in artillery matériel . . . [then] everyone who was a party to the deal might hope to be found hanging from a lamp-post."¹¹

It is important to stress here the President's unwillingness to base his policy upon these pessimistic views of the military advisers and his de-

9. Act of June 28, 1940, Public Law 671, 76th Cong. 54 U.S. Statutes 676.

10. Maurice Matloff and Edwin M. Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941-1942* (Washington: Department of the Army, 1953), p. 14.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

termination to act on the premise that the United Kingdom could and would continue to resist Germany. On June 22 he indicated to the Chief of Staff and the Chief of Naval Operations that he was, "in general," mindful of the legitimate grounds for such fears, but he voiced confidence that a "little help" would see England through and would be "desirable from the point of view of our defense."¹²

As the weeks wore on that summer the course of the war convinced the military authorities that the President had more accurately gauged British capabilities than had they. The anticipated invasion of the British Isles never materialized, and the *Luftwaffe* failed signally to achieve any decision in its air offensive against the island kingdom. This turn of events produced, ironically enough, even more difficult contingencies for the American military establishment to contend with.

Specifically, there was the clear recognition of the vital interest of the U.S. in British survival and victory. There was no debating of this point. On the other hand, it was recognized that Britain would require, to maintain an effective war effort, a veritable cascade of supplies from America. For this purpose, the improvised aid program then existing was far from adequate. Moreover, it was obvious that even a gigantic program of material aid was not enough—that victory would necessitate direct military participation by the U.S.¹³ Hence, there was a complex balancing of means and objectives to be striven for, in order to supply Britain and mobilize the sleeping American giant. The inadequacies of existing U.S. capacity even to accomplish the first of these sufficed to produce a bewildering conflict in priorities.

By the end of 1940, the President had conceived of a solution to the problem of implementing the "great commitment." Several indications were given by him during that summer and fall of the "grand design" of lend-lease that was being gradually developed. At a meeting of the Defense Advisory Commission in July he had suggested the possibility of leasing cargo ships to Britain,¹⁴ and at a Cabinet meeting on November 7 he had, according to Secretary of the Interior Ickes, spoken of leasing to Britain anything that was "loanable, returnable, and insurable."¹⁵ Still, he postponed thinking the matter through to a final resolution.

12. Quoted in Watson, *Chief of Staff*, p. 111.

13. These estimates were made particularly explicit in the "Plan Dog" memorandum submitted to the President that fall by the chiefs of staff and in a memorandum drafted by the Joint Planning Committee early in January, 1941. See Matloff and Snell, *Strategic Planning*, pp. 27-29; and Watson, *Chief of Staff*, p. 371.

14. Edward R. Stettinius, *Lend-Lease: Weapon for Victory* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1944), p. 32.

15. *The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), III, 376.

During early December it became manifest that Britain's supply of dollars was at the point of exhaustion. Unless the aid program were reorganized on sound and ample lines and maintained by U.S. financial power, it was obvious that the "great commitment" and Britain's entire war effort were in grave jeopardy. Returning from a Caribbean cruise, during which he had been informed by his principal advisers concerned with the aid program that Britain's deficit was some \$5 billion, the President moved swiftly to meet the crisis. In a press conference of December 17, a "fireside chat" on December 29, and his State of the Union message of January 6, he disclosed and elaborated the course of action which was to be named "lend-lease."¹⁶

In making these utterances, and in conversations with his advisers, the Chief Executive emphasized that he was not contemplating making any loans. What he wanted, as he told the December 17 press conference, was to "eliminate the dollar sign," to accept British orders for supplies and "turn them into American orders. And thereupon," he explained, "as to such portion of them as the military events of the future determine to be right and proper for us to allow to go to the other side, either lease or sell that material, subject to mortgage, to the people on the other side."

Obviously, the President was thinking not merely in terms of "aid" but of a combined effort in company with the other enemies of the Axis. Consequently, while lend-lease was conceived of as the "aid to Britain" bill, the President spoke also in the broader sense of making America the "arsenal of democracy" and of assisting "those resolute people who are resisting aggression." Just as in the Charlottesville address, where he pledged U.S. aid to the "opponents of force," the President deliberately made his appeal not only in the direct terms of rendering assistance to Britain but rather in the character of placing American power behind all those who were engaged in the conflict to defeat the Axis. Prime Minister Churchill, in his eloquent letter to the President on December 8, 1940, in which he described in detail the magnitude of Britain's needs, had concluded by asking the President not to regard the message as an "appeal for aid, but as a statement of the minimum action necessary to achieve our common purpose."¹⁷ There can be no doubt that the President so regarded it.

16. *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1950), IX, 605ff.

17. Churchill has given the complete text of that famous letter in *Their Finest Hour*, pp. 558-67. He speaks of it as one of the most important documents he wrote throughout the war. Delivered to the President while on his Caribbean cruise, where he was pondering the problem of supplying Britain, it no doubt exercised a profound and telling influence.

H.R. 1776

The task of drafting the necessary legislation to implement these ideas was assigned by the Chief Executive, on January 2, 1941, to Edward H. Foley, Jr., General Counsel to Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau, and to Foley's assistant, Oscar Cox. The Treasury lawyers produced a draft the following day, and for the next week this was carefully studied and revised in the State, War, and Navy departments. A bill-drafting commission from the House of Representatives was brought into these consultations, and by January 7 a final draft had received presidential approval. Strategy conferences in the Cabinet and with Congressional leaders then ensued. On January 10 the Speaker of the House introduced the historic measure in that chamber, with the happy designation H.R. 1776.¹⁸

The legislative debate that then began continued for two months. It was clear that a momentous decision was at hand, and a sharp and sometimes bitter struggle resulted. In the end, the Lend-Lease Act passed the two houses by large majorities—260-165 in the House and 60-31 in the Senate—and was signed by the President on March 11.¹⁹

The sweeping delegation of power contained in lend-lease may be summarized as follows with regard to its outstanding provisions.²⁰ The President, "in the interest of national defense," could authorize such agents in the Executive branch as he might designate to "manufacture . . . or otherwise procure . . . any defense article for the government of any country whose defense the President deems vital to the defense of the United States." "Defense article" was defined to include not only weapons, munitions, aircraft, and ships but machinery, equipment, and materials necessary to the manufacture or repair and servicing of these items, and "any agricultural, industrial or other commodity or article for defense."

These articles the President or his agents could then "sell, transfer title to, exchange, lease, lend, or otherwise dispose of, to any such government"; and the "terms and conditions upon which any such foreign

18. On the drafting of lend-lease, see Henry Morgenthau, Jr., "The Morgenthau Diaries: IV—The Story Behind Lend-Lease," *Collier's*, October 18, 1947, pp. 16-17, 71-75; the revealing article by Arthur Krock in the *New York Times*, January 22, 1943, p. 22; and William L. Langer and S. Everett Gleason, *The Undeclared War, 1940-1941* (New York: Harper and Brothers and the Council on Foreign Relations, 1953), pp. 254-58.

19. An excellent compendium of the Congressional debates was given by Professor Charles A. Beard, one of the bill's severest critics, in his *President Roosevelt and the Coming of the War, 1941: A Study in Appearances and Realities* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), pp. 13-68. See also Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, pp. 262-84.

20. Public Law 11, 77th Cong. 55 *U.S. Statutes* 32 (1941).

government receives any aid," it was provided, "shall be those which the President deems satisfactory, and the benefit to the United States may be payment or repayment in kind or property, or any other direct or indirect benefit which the President deems satisfactory."

In all its vital parts the act provided the President with substantially the authority requested, and Congress on March 27 made an appropriation of \$7 billion to implement the policies contained in H.R. 1776.²¹ There were, of course, some limitations and reservations attached by the legislative branch. The duration of this grant of power was limited to two years, subject then to renewal; a proviso was inserted stating that nothing in the act was to be construed as authorizing the Navy to convoy the vessels delivering the aid; and the President was required to submit reports on lend-lease operations at the close of each quarter. Evidently the President personally felt a great deal of concern with only one aspect of the finished product. This was the so-called Dirksen amendment, inserted into the act with the endorsement of the Chief Executive's lieutenants in Congress in order to silence the opposition protest that the bill conferred dictatorial powers. The amendment enabled Congress at any time to withdraw the delegated powers through means of a concurrent resolution.²² As matters developed, the President's concern in this regard was ill-founded.

From the practical standpoint of lend-lease operations during the remainder of that year, the most significant limitation placed upon the Executive by Congress was that contained in the "Billion Three" clause of the Lend-Lease Act. This clause was a manifestation, in some respects, of the same suspicions which led Congress to pass the so-called Walsh amendment in June of 1940. It specified that transfers of defense articles procured under appropriations made before March 11, 1941, could not be made in excess of \$1.3 billion; and it directed that the President should not authorize such transfers of articles produced under the earlier appropriations "except after consultation with the Chief of Staff . . . or the Chief of Naval Operations . . . or both." Considering the time obviously required before the \$7 billion authorized for lend-lease could be transformed into military supplies and equipment ready for delivery, the "Billion Three" clause provided the framework for supplying most

21. Public Law 23, 77th Cong. 55 *U.S. Statutes* 43 (1941).

22. See the authoritative article by the late Justice Robert H. Jackson, "A Presidential Legal Opinion," *Harvard Law Review*, LXVI (1952-53), 1353-61. Jackson, then the Attorney-General, pointed out that the President abstained from any public statement on the amendment—although very doubtful of the constitutionality—so that his friends would not be embarrassed; but the President took the extraordinary step of writing a memorandum which expressed his misgivings.

of the military aid actually available during the first months of the program.²³

It is also important at this point to observe that the administrative and operating procedures through which the lend-lease program would be implemented were left largely to the discretion of the President. Before the act had completed its journey through Congress, he had determined to vest in Harry L. Hopkins, his closest adviser, the task of directing the lend-lease program. Mindful of the intense hostility toward Hopkins on the part of many in Congress, the President conferred no title upon his aide—insisting merely that Hopkins was the “bookkeeper” who would “advise and assist” in lend-lease matters.²⁴ Rather than creating any major operating agency for the purposes of the program, the President established in early May an inconspicuous Division of Defense Aid Reports in the Office of Emergency Management. This division was the clearing house for lend-lease, the processing channel and coordinating center through which requisitions for defense articles were filed by foreign governments. For actual procurement and purchasing operations, these requisitions were sent by the Division of Defense Aid Reports to the departments and agencies within whose jurisdiction requested items would fall. The final release of the finished product was then in the sole authority of the President, subject only to his consulting with the chiefs of staff.²⁵ Later the President conferred upon Edward R. Stettinius the title of Lend-Lease Administrator, and in October an Office of Lend-Lease Administration was established in the OEM, but basic procedure and the locus of authority remained substantially unchanged.

MAJOR IMPLICATIONS OF LEND-LEASE

Armed with the provisions of H.R. 1776, the Chief Executive was enabled, simply by declaring the defense of other nations “vital to the defense of the United States,” to transform the entire program of defense aid into a “powerful instrument of global policy.”²⁶ Britain, to be sure, was the prime beneficiary, then and throughout the remainder of World War II, but the program went much further than that. By December of 1941 a total of thirty-eight nations—including all belligerents

23. The ramifications of the “Billion Three” clause—Section 3 (a) (2)—are discussed at greater length in subsequent chapters.

24. Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), pp. 265-67; and Arthur Krock, *New York Times*, May 13, 1941, p. 22.

25. On early lend-lease administration and procedure, see the President's *First Report to Congress under the Act of March 11, 1941* (1941), pp. 14ff.

26. William A. Brown, Jr., and Redvers Opie, *American Foreign Assistance* (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1953), p. 35.

arrayed against the Axis and most anti-Axis neutrals—had been declared eligible for lend-lease assistance.²⁷ And all of this could be done without prior treaty or financial negotiations.

The Lend-Lease Act immediately enabled Great Britain to continue and to expand the procurement of war supplies in the U.S. without regard to ability to pay. Of equal, if not greater, importance, the act made possible a greater degree of coordination in the entire realm of war procurement and supply, recognizing, as it did, the common claim of the U.S. itself and the nations eligible for aid upon American resources and potential. All requisitions for supply, once approved by U.S. authorities, became U.S. government orders regardless of origin. The finished product, whether medium bombers or bushels of corn, could then be distributed in accordance with the exigencies of the hour, on the basis of existing American or Allied needs and requirements, with the full power of decision resting with U.S. officials. It was inevitable that lend-lease would prompt more earnest contemplation by these officials as to the scope of the effort necessary to mobilize American resources to insure victory. This was required, in any event, but it is significant that the long process of planning that produced the Victory Program was clearly in evidence within a few weeks after the passage of H.R. 1776.

The basic issues of U.S. policy in the world crisis were not, of course, finally resolved by the Lend-Lease Act. For the military planners and the foremost officials concerned with the aid program were under no illusions that lend-lease was all that was required. In a conference as far back as December 16, 1940, Secretary of War Stimson, Secretary of Navy Knox, General Marshall, and Admiral Stark found themselves in agreement that the emergency "could hardly be passed over without this country being drawn into the war eventually."²⁸ From January 29 to March 27, 1941, representatives of the Chief of Staff and the Chief of Naval Operations held a series of secret conversations in Washington with representatives of the British chiefs of staff. The stated purpose of these conferences was "To determine the best methods by which the armed forces of the United States and the British Commonwealth, with its present allies, could defeat Germany and the Powers allied with her, should the United States be compelled to resort to war."²⁹

27. *Twenty-First Report to Congress on Lend-Lease Operations* (1945), pp. 44-45.

28. Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), p. 366.

29. The full text of the final report of these military conferences, designated ABC₁, is given in Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack, *Hearings Pursuant to S. Con. Res. 27 and 49, Authorizing an Investigation of the Attack on Pearl Harbor, on December 7, 1941, and Events and Circumstances Related Thereto* (79th Cong., 1st Sess., 1946), Pt. 15, pp. 1485ff. (Hereinafter to be cited as *Pearl Harbor Hearings*.)

Yet it is true that the Lend-Lease Act was debated almost wholly in terms of preventing an Axis victory without the painful necessity of direct American participation. To the extent that Congress or the public accepted lend-lease in the "conviction" or "hope" of U.S. non-involvement, it was an "unrealistic" acceptance.³⁰ That such a hope was present seems undeniable, but any such conviction is open to some doubt. Lend-lease itself would indicate, at any rate, that the foremost conviction of the American people was that a German victory would be intolerable.

Emerging from this complex of U.S. objectives, policy, and commitments in 1941 were these salient facts:

1. Lend-lease represented a solid commitment of American economic power to the defeat of the Axis.
2. This commitment was debated chiefly in terms of "aid to Britain" but was enacted in the nature of a sweeping declaration of global policy.
3. The concept and grand design of lend-lease were developed by the President himself. In gradually formulating this concept, the President had confidence in his own estimate of the existing crisis and its implications for American security, even in the face of countervailing estimates by the highest military authorities.
4. The global commitment against the Axis that the Lend-Lease Act in effect codified was the object of long and acrimonious debate. Nevertheless, it was accepted in the end by very substantial Congressional majorities and was followed by the prompt appropriation of vast sums of money by Congress in order to achieve the purposes of the act. There was also substantial public endorsement of all these policy decisions.

30. Winfield W. Riefler, "Turning Points of the War: Our Economic Contribution to Victory," *Foreign Affairs*, XXVI (1947-48), 97.

II.

The Soviet Union and the Formulation and Enactment of Lend-Lease

U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS IN EARLY 1941

IN THE MIDST of the global crisis that confronted the American policy-makers in 1941, the position and orientation of the Soviet Union presented both dangers and opportunities. While Soviet military strength was rated quite low by most military experts in both the U.S. and Britain, its significance in a struggle of such scope as the one then developing could hardly be overlooked. Since August of 1939, when the Kremlin entered into its ill-famed agreement with the Third Reich, the U.S.S.R. had tentatively aligned itself with the enemies of the U.S. and had embarked upon an expansionist policy that angered the American public and caused concern among U.S. officials. Yet, by 1941 Russia was still not irrevocably committed to Germany, and its relations with Japan were far from cordial.

American cognizance of these factors is well illustrated in successive bulletins of the Military Intelligence section of the Army. In its periodic bulletin of January 23, 1941, for example, G-2 pointed to the generally "indeterminate political relations between Germany, U.S.S.R., and Japan." The bulletin of that date pointed out that, though Japan had formally aligned itself with the Axis in the Tripartite Pact of September, 1940, it obviously was not hastening to fulfill any commitments to the Axis. A significant factor responsible for this, G-2 noted, was Japan's "fear of the Soviets."¹ Obviously the Soviet Siberian Army was a key element in any strategic planning directed toward restraining Japan from embarking further upon the paths of aggression.

More concretely, with respect to the Far Eastern situation, the U.S. was keenly interested in Soviet aid to the hard-pressed Chungking gov-

1. The text of this bulletin is in the *Pearl Harbor Hearings*, Pt. 21, pp. 4706-7.

ernment. In the fall of 1940, for example, the President had suggested at a Cabinet meeting that an arrangement be worked out whereby the U.S. would purchase certain raw materials from the U.S.S.R. subject to an informal agreement that the Soviet government would use at least a part of the proceeds from the sale to finance additional aid to the Chinese.² In the early part of 1941, when Japan appeared bent on further moves in southeast Asia, and when Great Britain expressed to Washington great anxiety that Japan would embark upon an attack against Singapore or the Netherlands East Indies during the spring, American interest in preventing a Soviet-Japanese *rapprochement* was patently clear.³

The Soviet position in regard to Europe was more shrouded in uncertainty than was the case in China and the Far East. The U.S. was fully aware of the economic assistance to the German war effort being furnished by the U.S.S.R. On January 10, 1941, a new Nazi-Soviet trade agreement was concluded, amidst profuse utterances by Tass about the "spirit of mutual understanding and confidence" existing between the two governments.⁴ While the importance to Germany of Soviet raw materials was fully appreciated by both London and Washington, American officials realized that such ostentatious manifestations of harmony did not tell a definitive story. As G-2 expressed it in an intelligence bulletin submitted on March 18, "The U.S.S.R. continues to work with Germany, but her ultimate decision has not yet been made."⁵

The Welles-Oumansky Conversations

Precisely this consideration had led U.S. diplomatic officials, beginning late in the summer of 1940, to begin a quest for some means of improving relations with the U.S.S.R. It was not an enticing prospect. In the wake of the Nazi-Soviet Pact of August, 1939, of the Soviet attack upon Finland, and the subsequent seizure of the Baltic states, relations between Moscow and Washington could only be described as "nominal." Negotiations would have been trying at best, and they were further complicated by the behavior of the Soviet Ambassador in Washington, Constantin Oumansky. Secretary of State Hull has written of Oumansky that he was "one of the most difficult foreign diplomats with whom

2. This was mentioned at the Cabinet meeting of September 27, 1940. See Ickes, *Secret Diary*, III, 340.

3. On U.S.-British fears of renewed Japanese activity in early 1941, see Herbert Feis, *The Road to Pearl Harbor: The Coming of the War Between the United States and Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), pp. 150-56.

4. See the *New York Times*, January 11, 1941, p. 1. The text of the Tass communique is in *Documents on American Foreign Relations: 1940-1941*, Vol. III, edited by S. Shepard Jones and Denys P. Myers (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1941), pp. 344-45.

5. *Pearl Harbor Hearings*, Pt. 21, p. 4737.

we ever had to deal." The Russian was, in Hull's words, "insulting in his manner and speech" and "had an infallible faculty for antagonizing those of us with whom he came in contact."⁶

However distasteful the task, the gravity of the issues prompted the initiation of a long series of conversations between Oumansky and the Under-Secretary of State, Sumner Welles. The Under-Secretary has recounted that he was personally convinced by mid-1940 that the Nazi-Soviet collaboration "could only be one of sheer expediency and of relatively short duration."⁷ It was this conviction, plus the larger strategic considerations already indicated, that fortified Welles for the laborious and trying discussions with the Soviet representative. Progress was scarcely discernible by the end of 1940, but it was necessary that the effort be continued.⁸

Lifting the "Moral Embargo"

A primary point at issue in the Soviet-American talks was the problem of Soviet orders for machine tools and other products in the U.S. Oumansky was particularly vehement in his denunciations of U.S. refusal to release for export \$4 million worth of finished machine tools, alleging that politically inspired discrimination rather than the American rearmament effort was responsible for the export license difficulties. Unable to end this impasse, Welles and Hull suggested to the President in the closing days of 1940 that he consent to the removal of the moral embargo placed on the Soviet Union during the Finnish War. Such a gesture, it was felt, would overshadow the problem of the requisitioned machine tools. The President gave his consent, though it was agreed that no publicity would be given to the action.⁹

When Oumansky was advised of this by Welles, on January 8, he loudly insisted that it was essential that a public announcement be made. As if to underscore his intransigence, he chose the same occasion to urge upon Welles that the U.S. recognize Soviet absorption of the Baltic states.¹⁰

These discussions coincided with the beginning of the lend-lease debates in Congress, as well as with mounting anxieties in both Washing-

6. *Memoirs*, II, 743.

7. Sumner Welles, *The Time for Decision* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944), pp. 169-70.

8. On the initiation of the Welles-Oumansky talks, see also Langer and Gleason, *The Challenge to Isolation*, pp. 723ff; and Forrest Davies and Ernest K. Lindley, *How War Came—An American White Paper: From the Fall of France to Pearl Harbor* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1942), pp. 164-65.

9. Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, pp. 337-38.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 338.

ton and London concerning a German drive into the Balkans and increasing tensions in the Far East. The Under-Secretary was disposed to accede to Oumansky's insistence on the matter of publicity. In a memorandum on January 9, he asked the President to permit the issuing of a formal announcement simultaneous with the removal of the embargo.¹¹ The President consented.

Accordingly, on January 21, the Soviet Ambassador was informed officially in a letter from Under-Secretary Welles of the removal of the moral embargo imposed in December, 1939, on the export to Russia of airplanes, materials essential to the construction of airplanes, and patent processes for the manufacturing of high quality aviation gasoline.¹² The actual significance of this step was slight. All commodities included in the embargo were under the export licensing control system established under the national defense program in the summer of 1940. But a "conciliatory" gesture had been made—one described by Hull as "designed to have a psychological effect."¹³ Probably the material insignificance of the decision is the most apt commentary on the existing state of U.S.-Soviet relations. Welles saw little change in the attitude of the Soviet Ambassador, though he was gratified to hear Oumansky remark on January 15 that the U.S.S.R. planned to increase munitions shipments to China and that Japanese expansion in China and to the south was against the interests of both the U.S. and the Soviet Union.¹⁴

A Rift with Great Britain

Such comments must have appeared as rather intangible gains to Welles, in the perspective of the difficulties under which he labored. At home there were rumblings in the press and on the floors of Congress about "appeasement" of Russia, and Britain expressed misgivings over U.S. exports to the U.S.S.R. during this period.

During the period from June to November of 1940 the British government had worked toward reaching some agreement with the U.S.S.R. The British Ambassador in Moscow, Stafford Cripps, had pressed for a comprehensive barter agreement but his effort was a vain one. Unable to reach any trading or other accord with the Russians, and concerned over the importance of Soviet raw materials to the German economy, the

11. Welles to Roosevelt, January 9, 1941 (Roosevelt Library, Official File 220, Box 2).

12. *Department of State Bulletin*, IV (1941), 107-8.

13. *Memoirs*, II, 969; and see also the comment by Arthur Krock, *New York Times*, January 23, 1941, p. 20.

14. Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 339.

British felt that they had no choice but to put economic pressure on Russia.¹⁵

In the opening days of 1941 this policy was manifested in expressions of British dissatisfaction with U.S. exports to the Soviet Union. The Minister of Economic Warfare, Hugh Dalton, told a group of correspondents on January 3 that Britain was "embarrassed" by the growing importance of Vladivostok as a "leak" in the blockade of Germany.¹⁶ It was clear that the British felt that the growing volume of U.S. exports to the U.S.S.R. was enabling Russia, in turn, to expand its exports to Germany.

The issue was a thorny one. For the U.S. to have diminished in quantity the volume of exports to the U.S.S.R. would have undone whatever the Welles-Oumansky conversations might have accomplished. Yet there was, beyond any doubt, a definitely strong case that could be made for the British complaint.¹⁷ In subsequent weeks Welles was to inject the matter into his talks with the Soviet Ambassador.

The basic position of the U.S. government was made clear to Lord Halifax by Secretary Hull in a discussion on February 5. The British Ambassador had called on Hull that day and took up the matter of exports to Russia, presenting a memorandum on the increase in Soviet purchasing in the U.S. Hull was disposed to attach no major importance to the increase. He reminded Halifax of the importance of the U.S.S.R. in the total international situation. He pointed out that, by all indications, the Russians had pushed some hard bargaining with Berlin and that this had had the effect of obstructing some German and Japanese plans. While none of this was intended for the benefit of the democracies, the Secretary pointed out that it redounded to the advantage of both the U.S. and Britain. He then recounted to Halifax the course of the Welles-Oumansky conversations over the past months and summarized American policy in these words:

Our purpose . . . is to give less occasion for Soviet officials to feel unkindly toward this Government, especially in the event of some pivotal development where the slightest influence might tip the scales at Moscow against us in a most damaging, far-reaching way. . . . I feel that Britain is tipping the

15. W. N. Medlicott, *The Economic Blockade*, in *History of the Second World War, United Kingdom Civil Series* (London: H.M.S.O. and Longmans, Green and Co., 1952), I, 648-59.

16. *New York Times*, January 4, 1941, p. 4.

17. See the memorandum of Dr. Karl Schnurre, head of the German economic mission sent to Moscow in 1940, dated September 28, 1940, in which the importance of Soviet deliveries to the German war economy is strongly emphasized. *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941*, edited by Raymond J. Sontag and James S. Beddie (Department of State Publication 3023, 1948), pp. 199-201.

scales when she presents publicly such proposals as calling on this Government to impose an embargo against Russia.¹⁸

These remarks underscore the fact that the American diplomats were not harboring any illusions about Soviet motives and intentions. Gestures and licenses, they well knew, would scarcely produce Soviet adherence to an anti-Axis coalition. They might, however, facilitate such an outcome should events convince the Kremlin that it was the road to survival. And Hull knew, as he conversed with Halifax, that Germany was devising plans that, if initiated, would compel the Soviet rulers to abandon any posture of partnership with Berlin. Before describing that aspect of the matter, it will be useful to indicate here the domestic political problems that were associated with any gesture of friendship toward Russia by American officials.

Domestic Critics of U.S. Policy Toward Russia

Criticized by some Cabinet members for adopting too inflexible an attitude toward the Russians,¹⁹ chided by Britain for indirectly weakening the blockade of Germany, and saddled with the task of negotiating with the annoying Russian Ambassador, Under-Secretary Welles soon found his troubles augmented by sharp public and Congressional attacks upon his efforts to "conciliate" the U.S.S.R.

Hostility to Soviet Russia on the part of the American public was dramatically illustrated just when the arrangements over the moral embargo were being agreed to by the release, on January 3, of a report by the House Committee on Un-American Activities. The report assailed Stalin as "no better than Hitler" and branded him an equally ruthless enemy of freedom. More pointedly, the Dies Committee charged that the Soviet Union was acting as the "financial front" in the U.S. for the Axis, using its position as a neutral to help the Axis win the war.²⁰

Such views were not confined to the Committee on Un-American Activities. On January 29 Congressman George Tinkham (R., Mass.), an inveterate proponent of enmity toward Soviet Russia, left the committee hearings on the Lend-Lease Bill to take the floor and charge Roosevelt and Hull with "attempted appeasement" of "homicidal, com-

18. Hull, *Memoirs*, II, 970-71.

19. Secretary of the Interior Ickes observed in his diary: "Henry Morgenthau and I are of the opinion that they [the talks with Oumansky] will never get anywhere so long as they are conducted on our side by Welles." *Secret Diary*, III, 340.

20. House of Representatives, Special Committee on Un-American Activities, *Investigation of Un-American Propaganda Activities in the United States*. H. Rp. 1, 77th Cong., 1st Sess. (1941). See also the article by Henry Dorris, *New York Times*, January 4, 1941, p. 1.

munistic Soviet Russia." The evidence for this was the removal of the moral embargo. Why, he asked, did the administration denounce Axis aggression and then serve notice on the world that America acquiesced in the ill-gotten gains of the U.S.S.R.?²¹ This charge of "playing favorites" among the aggressor nations, as Tinkham expressed it, was echoed and re-echoed in quarters critical of the Roosevelt policies during the course of 1941.

On the floor of the Senate, on February 3, Senator Tobey (R., N.H.) expressed his "amazement" over the lifting of the embargo and said that such action was "nothing more or less than appeasement of Russia by the United States." Both he and Senator Holman (R., Ore.), referring to shipments of strategic commodities from the U.S. to Russia and Japan, called upon some spokesman for the administration to explain to the Senate how the policy of supplying strategic materials to "aggressive powers" could be justified before the American people. Democratic spokesmen were silent.²² Some time later, in the House, Congressman Reed (R., N.Y.), became more explicit. He accused the administration of "arming our enemies," of pursuing policies "inconsistent with the promise of all aid to Great Britain," and charged that the Executive branch was thereby guilty of "two-faced, double-dealing, double-crossing methods" in its foreign policy.²³

Similar salvos were fired in the nation's press, even by newspapers friendly toward the administration's foreign policy. The *Los Angeles Times*, which supported the Lend-Lease Bill, expressed its inability to understand how Russia could be excluded from any list of aggressor nations or how any good could come from "appeasing" Russia.²⁴ During February the *Times* angrily called for an end to the release of exports to the Soviet Union.²⁵

The *New York Herald-Tribune*, also an ardent supporter of the Lend-Lease Bill, deemed it "strange" that the U.S. should send vital commodities to Russia. Shortly after the announcement of the Nazi-Soviet agreement of January 10 the *Herald-Tribune* editorialized: "For those persons who still believe that the United States should adopt a policy of appeasement toward the Soviet Union, the latest agreement provides an interesting illustration as to how the Soviet Government

21. *Congressional Record*, 77th Cong., 1st Sess., LXXXVII (1941), 383-84.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 467.

23. *Ibid.*, p. A1026.

24. January 24, 1941, Sec. II, p. 4.

25. February 5, 1941, Sec. II, p. 4; and February 12, 1941, Sec. II, p. 4.

reacts to American kindnesses."²⁶ A few days later the influential New York paper conceded that the public knew little of the intricacies of American-British-Soviet relations and acknowledged that a halt in U.S. exports would only drive Russia to Germany. But it adhered to its "concern" that these exports were weakening the efficacy of the British blockade.²⁷

Washington Learns of Operation "Barbarossa"

The fact was that the President and the Department of State were by this time in possession of information which demonstrated in the most striking manner the wisdom of the quest for an improvement in U.S.-Soviet relations. The American Commercial Attaché in Berlin, Sam E. Woods, was on friendly terms with an influential but anti-Nazi German who had contacts with some of the German ministries, the Reichsbank, and some Nazi party potentates. As early as August, 1940, this German friend told Woods that discussions were in progress at the Fuehrer's headquarters about preparations for an invasion of the Soviet Union. During the ensuing weeks Woods continued to send to Washington additional information on the subject and in January of 1941 dispatched a document of truly staggering import. His informant had secured a copy of Hitler's Directive No. 21—the "Barbarossa" directive—ordering immediate preparations for the campaign in Russia.²⁸ These reports were turned over to the Chief of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and were thoroughly checked to determine if they were "plants." It developed that they met all tests and were accepted as "authentic."²⁹

After the removal of the moral embargo, the Welles-Oumansky conversations had meanwhile continued on their desultory course. Oumansky was in the Under-Secretary's office on February 24 again charging discrimination against Soviet orders. He took the occasion to raise again the provocative subject of the Baltic states. Welles, for his part, was patiently working to get export licenses for the Russians, despite resistance from agencies concerned with the requirements of the defense program. He put the Ambassador on the defensive, however, by asking

26. January 19, 1941, Sec. II, p. 10.

27. February 2, 1941, Sec. II, p. 10.

28. A brief and well-documented account of German political and military planning for the war on Russia is given by Alexander Dallin in his *German Rule in Russia, 1941-1945* (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1957), pp. 4-18. On the military aspects see U.S. Department of the Army, *The German Campaign in Russia: Planning and Operations* (Department of the Army Pamphlet No. 20-261a, 1955), pp. 1-43.

29. Hull, *Memoirs*, II, 967-69; Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, pp. 336-37; and Welles, *Time for Decision*, pp. 170-71.

that the Soviets make a unilateral declaration that American products were not being re-exported to the Reich.³⁰

To be sure, the course of Soviet policy could hardly be re-directed by the issuance of a few export licenses in the U.S. Being appraised of the momentous plans being drawn up in Berlin and worried over Japanese Foreign Minister Matsuoka's coming journey to Moscow and Berlin, the President, Hull, and Welles resolved to continue the effort to find some common ground with the Soviet Union. The gulf dividing the American Democracy and the Socialist Fatherland seemed deep and broad, but, after all, the indications were that the German Fuehrer might achieve what months of diplomatic wrangling had failed to accomplish and compel an alignment of the U.S.S.R. with the West.

SOVIET RUSSIA AND THE LEND-LEASE DEBATES

U.S. relations with the Soviet Union were not, to be sure, the overriding concern of American policy-makers during the period encompassed by the foregoing discussion. These relations were contingent ones, important only as they affected the basic American commitment to work for the defeat of Nazi Germany and any powers associated with it. It was this commitment, its validity and the character it should assume if it were valid, which was the focus of the "great debate" over lend-lease from January through March, 1941. The formulation and enactment of lend-lease must now be discussed, within the context of the policies being pursued at that time with reference to the Soviet Union.

The lifting of the moral embargo, symbolic of the administration's quest for an improvement in Soviet relations, and the policy of granting export licenses to the Russians where it was feasible coincided in time with the introduction of the Lend-Lease Bill in Congress. It is a significant fact that critics of the Roosevelt policies were able to capitalize upon these Soviet policies—to use them as a vantage point from which to assail the lend-lease proposal. The adoption of this line of attack in itself offers a meaningful commentary upon the disdain with which most Americans held Communist Russia. To the public eye the Kremlin was facilitating Germany's war everywhere, while hampering the defense program in the U.S. through the device of Communist-inspired strikes, such as the prolonged work-stoppage at the Allis-Chalmers plant.

30. Memorandum of conversation, Welles and Oumansky, February 24, 1941 (Department of State MS, File No. 711.61/835). Hereinafter State Department MSS will be indicated by the inclusion of the appropriate file number. All other manuscript sources will be designated by name.

Section 3 (a) (1) of the Lend-Lease Bill

Soviet Russia entered into the lend-lease debates through the door provided by Section 3 (a) (1) of the proposed bill. It was this section which authorized the President to extend aid under the terms of the act to "any country whose defense the President deems vital to the defense of the United States." Here indeed was a vast reservoir of discretionary power for the Chief Executive. Just entering upon an unprecedented third term in that high office, and for years bitterly assailed by his opponents for holding dictatorial propensities, such a provision as this, when joined to the other far-reaching powers of the bill and to the hard-fought running battle between isolationists and interventionists, inevitably provoked heated dissent. The fact is that the opponents of Section 3 (a) (1) chose to wage their battle largely in terms of assertions that the clause would some day be used to supply American largess for the Soviet Union.

It is logical to inquire at this juncture if the Executive branch, in formulating the lend-lease policy, deliberately weighed the possibility of Soviet participation in the program at some future time. According to Robert Sherwood, the President was urged by some of his "more timid friends" to accept a compromise with his opponents which would exclude Soviet Russia. Sherwood writes that the President was "firm on this point, for it then seemed possible if not probable that Russia would be attacked by Germany or Japan or both and would be desperately in need of American help." He also recounts that there was some debate among the President's advisers over the use of the phrase "arsenal of democracy" in connection with the bill, "since it might seem to preclude the eventual extension of aid to the Soviet Union or to certain Latin American 'republics'."³¹ These terse comments appear greatly to oversimplify the problem and to convey an impression of clear-cut, advance planning upon Soviet belligerency against the Axis which is rather misleading.

For one thing, the President was certainly thinking chiefly in terms of assisting Britain when he conceived the broad outlines of the lend-lease program during December. The first draft of the bill, written by Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau's legal aides, was put together on January 2, 1941, then carefully gone over by Secretary of War Stimson, Green Hackworth of the Department of State, and other presidential advisers. Congressional leaders were also consulted. Secretary Morgenthau has written in his diary that the advice against specifying within the bill the

31. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp. 226, 264.

countries to be aided was given by Mr. Justice Felix Frankfurter.³² The general advantages of such a flexible grant of power were obviously manifold. Without requesting any additional authorization from Congress, the President was thereby left free to use his lend-lease power as an instrument to aid any combination of powers which the course of events or Allied diplomacy might align against the Axis.

Specifically, the introduction of the Lend-Lease Bill in Congress, and the weeks of debate that followed, occurred simultaneously with increasing tensions in the Far East and with mounting German pressures designed to engulf the Balkan states. It was the German advance into the Balkans which was explicitly cited by administration spokesmen in arguing against proposed amendments which would have listed within the act the eligible recipients or have placed in Congress the power to designate the nations to be assisted. Majority Leader Barkley stressed the Balkan situation in mid-February, saying, "We don't know what country may be attacked next and we don't want to discourage resistance to aggression by limiting the number of countries that can get our help." He then went on to cite Turkey as a nation that might be "seriously affected" by such a limitation.³³

A more arresting illustration of the advantages of Section 3 (a) (1), in the light of the Balkan crisis, was the use of the Lend-Lease Bill in American diplomatic efforts to bolster resistance to German pressures in that area. On February 14, for example, Secretary Hull gave to the Yugoslav Ambassador a message which stated: "The President also desires it to be realized that the so-called Lend-Lease Bill now before Congress and which has been passed by the House of Representatives and by the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate permits . . . the President to supply the materials of war to those nations that are now the victims of aggression or which might be threatened with aggression." Ambassador MacMurray in Ankara was cabled an almost identical statement to present to the government of Turkey.³⁴

It was natural that the administration should be in vigorous opposition to such amendments as those of Representative Simpson (R., N.Y.), which would have restricted the powers granted under the bill to Great Britain and the British Commonwealth, plus such other countries as Congress might designate by concurrent resolution;³⁵ and it is under-

32. Cited in Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 256.

33. See the articles by Hedley Donovan in the *Washington Post* and by Harold B. Hinton in the *New York Times*, on February 16, 1941.

34. Quoted in Hull, *Memoirs*, II, 929.

35. Turner Catledge, *New York Times*, January 14, 1941, p. 1.

standable that the administration would oppose such proposals as that by Wendell Willkie to the effect that, in the interests of unanimity and concord, the act specify Britain, China, and Greece as the countries to be aided.³⁶

Aside from the contemporary dangers present in the Balkan situation, it is important to note that this insistence upon the provisions of Section 3 (a)(1) was consistent with the whole experience of defense aid since the establishment of Secretary Morgenthau's interdepartmental liaison committee on foreign military purchasing operations in the U.S. shortly after the outbreak of the war in Europe. American officials had been literally swamped with aid requests, not only from Britain, France, and China, but from Finland, Ireland, and other nations in need of armaments. The trend of events, the philosophy of the President, and the logic of experience dictated the advantages of an open-ended authorization.³⁷

The legislative battle over Section 3 (a)(1) was not to be fought merely in general terms, however. In articulating their case against this section, its opponents made the possibility of aiding Russia the focal point of their attack. Able to cite the embargo removal as an item of evidence and, in some instances, drawing upon the usual anti-New Deal charge that the Roosevelt administration was tainted with Communist sympathies, isolationists and some conservative colleagues brandished before Congress the spectre of the American taxpayer contributing to the military strength of bolshevism.

When confronted with the concrete issue of measures designed to exclude Soviet Russia by name from any participation in the aid program, the administration could hardly have announced its knowledge of German plans for a war on the U.S.S.R. or have explained in specific terms its policies toward the U.S.S.R. The strategy employed to counteract these amendments will be considered in connection with the legislative debates. It suffices to say that the situation was obviously one of some delicacy. While it is quite likely that some "timid friends," as Sherwood put it, did counsel a compromise on that point, and while the foreknowledge of Operation "Barbarossa" must certainly have been taken into consideration, there is little to indicate any deliberate planning

36. See Willkie's testimony in Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Hearings on S. 275, A Bill Further to Promote the Defense of the United States, and for Other Purposes*, 77th Cong., 1st Sess. (1941), Pt. 3, pp. 875, 879. (Hereinafter cited as *Senate, Lend-Lease Hearings*.)

37. The significance of the liaison committee's experience in this respect was pointed out to the writer by Major General James H. Burns, U.S.A., Retd., in an interview on January 29, 1958. General Burns worked with the committee and was subsequently the executive officer of the lend-lease agency.

or calculation with respect to aiding the U.S.S.R. in the future. The significant facts are that Section 3 (a)(1) was insisted upon and defended against all attacks and that the President and his closest advisers were dedicated completely to the objective of defeating Germany. All who subscribed to that objective were eligible for enlistment in the cause—such seems to have been the intent of Section 3 (a)(1). At precisely that time the administration was doing what it reasonably could to encourage the Soviet Union to abandon its *entente* with Germany. Consent to any pre-announced judgment that Soviet Russia would never be entitled to U.S. assistance would have been contradictory to every tenet of U.S. foreign policy in the world crisis of 1941. An examination of the legislative hearings and the floor debates of the Lend-Lease Bill will underscore this interpretation.

Committee Discussion of Section 3 (a) (1)

The legislative battle over lend-lease formally opened on January 15, 1941, when Secretary of State Hull testified in support of the bill before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. This was approximately one week before the announcement of the lifting of the moral embargo, but the Secretary's prepared statement was such that the question of U.S. policy with regard to the U.S.S.R. and the general Soviet position in the international conflict were promptly injected into the committee discussions.

In keeping with the general tenor of the policies already discussed, the Secretary recited before the committee the long catalogue of armed aggression perpetrated by Germany, Italy, and Japan. He specifically mentioned all countries overrun by Germany. He referred to the "partitioning of Poland" and to the "splitting up of Rumania," but he scrupulously avoided any reference to the Soviet Union.³⁸ This avoidance led Congressman Mundt (R., S.D.) to ask the Secretary if he had heard him correctly. Hull answered that he had omitted numerous important aspects of the international situation because he "was seeking to go back and build up all of the relevant facts which point to the present danger from the three nations that have been avowedly engaged in a movement of world conquest by force." Politely, but insistently, Mundt pressed his line of inquiry, continually reverting to Russia and to Communist party subversive activities as key elements in the pattern of aggression

³⁸ See House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Hearings on H.R. 1776, A Bill Further to Promote the Defense of the United States, and for Other Purposes*, 77th Cong., 1st Sess. (1941), pp. 2-7, for Hull's prepared statement. (Hereinafter this will be cited as House, *Lend-Lease Hearings*.)

loosed upon the world. The Secretary refused to be drawn into these channels, however, and at one point acidly commented that he would gladly take up "all other phases of international affairs when we conclude this particular analysis of the situation as it relates primarily to the state of danger we are in and the authors of that danger."³⁹

Hull's omission of the U.S.S.R., coupled with the existence of Section 3 (a) (1), prompted even more pointed inquiries from Representative Tinkham, one of the most outspoken of the isolationists. Tinkham, during an acrid interrogation of the Secretary of State, asked: "Do I understand that if Russia is attacked the United States will extend the same help that it will to England?" Hull answered: "That is so theoretical I think it would not help to discuss it." Tinkham attempted to press the point but was rebuffed by the Secretary and by Chairman Sol Bloom.⁴⁰

On January 16 and 17, when Secretary of War Stimson was testifying before the committee, Tinkham lashed out more vigorously at Section 3 (a)(1). He insisted that the provision enabled the President to put U.S. resources, "short of manpower," behind "any country in the world." Could he not, asked Tinkham, supply aid to the U.S.S.R.? Stimson protested that Tinkham was overlooking the key part of the controversial section—that the President had to make a finding that the country in question was "vital to the defense of the United States." He insisted, over the Massachusetts Republican's caustic dissent, that such authority could safely and best be left in the Executive's hands. He conceded that Congress might amend the bill to name the recipients but warned that in such an event the bill might require modification at any time.⁴¹

When Mundt returned to the fray, he once more indicated his preoccupation with the failure to include Russia in the classification of aggressor nations. How could the U.S. categorize aggressors, he asked, and say that it would aid the victims of one but not aid the victims of the other? Stimson tried again to answer in terms of the national interest. It was the purpose of the bill, he stated, to counter the actions of those who posed a threat to the security of the U.S., not to enable the U.S. to "take on every ruffian."⁴²

The question of Soviet Russia in connection with Section 3 (a)(1) naturally arose also in the hearings before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. On January 29, when Stimson was appearing before that body, Senator Vandenberg made the first references to these issues. After

39. *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

41. *Ibid.*, pp. 108-11.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 169.

expressing serious doubts as to the wisdom or need for conferring such authority upon the President, he turned specifically to Russia. "Let me personify the question," he remarked. "Under the terms of this bill the President could lease, loan, or give away any war material he saw fit to Russia, under circumstances, if he wanted to, could he not?"⁴³ Stimson made no attempt to deny this, but he again emphasized that the President would first have to find the defense of Russia vital to U.S. defense. The Secretary of War again, as before the Foreign Affairs Committee, warned that to list the recipients would not be a wise step in the face of constantly changing international conditions. Conscious of hostility felt against the U.S.S.R., Stimson went on to make this admonition to the committee: "I do not know that you had better define it [the nations to be eligible], if you undertake to do it in Congress, by saying that you exclude Russia. I think Mr. Hull might say that that might give his department trouble."⁴⁴

A few minutes later Senator Pepper (D., Fla.) alluded to these remarks and observed that he knew of no reason why the U.S. should seek to "offend" the Soviet Union. Stimson agreed that such action "would be highly injudicious."⁴⁵

Stimson was further interrogated with reference to this "elastic clause" by Senator Clark (D., Mo.), who expressed to the Secretary of War and thereafter to each successive witness his suspicions that the President was likely to turn over to Russia "battleships, antiaircraft guns, food, oil," and perhaps other materials, in order to mollify or "appease" the U.S.S.R. for the purpose of protecting British interests in the Far East.⁴⁶ Senator Nye put his weight to the oar in questioning Secretary of Navy Knox, though without the Far Eastern embellishments offered by Clark.⁴⁷

It is noteworthy that the members of both committees who attacked Section 3 (a) (1) and expressed suspicion that Soviet Russia might someday be aided under its authorization cast their votes against lend-lease. In reporting the bill out to the two houses, there was a clear-cut division on the question of the "elastic clause," with the opposition "personifying" its case by reference to the Soviet Union. The House Committee majority report, written largely by Oscar Cox, the principal author of the bill, did not enter into discussion of the eligibility question directly.⁴⁸ The minority report, however, concluded its argument on this note:

43. Senate, *Lend-Lease Hearings*, Pt. 1, p. 119.

44. *Ibid.*

45. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

46. *Ibid.*, pp. 147-49.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 203.

48. Committee on Foreign Affairs, *To Promote the Defense of the United States*. H. Rp. 18, 77th Cong., 1st Sess. (1941).

Congress should specify the nations to receive aid. To leave it wide open would mean the President, now that we have lifted the moral embargo, could give aid to Russia, by sending planes and war materials. Congress is to be in session for some months. It can extend aid to other countries if it is necessary.⁴⁹

In the reports from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, both the majority and the minority felt it important to take up the question of specifying or not specifying the countries that could be aided. The majority report declared that "serious consideration" had been given to amending the bill along those lines but that it was finally deemed unwise. The report went on to say that "the scene might change in the near future so that the defense of the Argentine or Turkey might also become vital to our defense" and that the power of making such a decision was better vested in the Executive.⁵⁰

The minority report, drafted by Senator Hiram Johnson (R., Calif.), branded the bill as "a pure grant of power to the President to do as he pleases with any foreign nation." Citing the President's defense of the policy of all-out aid in his Fireside Chat of December 29, where the President had said it was no more "unneutral" for the U.S. to aid Britain than for Russia and other nations to send supplies to Germany, the report commented: "Think of the irony of this. Russia fixes our standards today." Turning to Secretary Hull's prepared statement, the minority statement observed that the Secretary had recited a "terrible" record of actions by aggressor nations. It then made this indictment:

But in this picture he carefully refrains from mentioning Russia, and the ink was scarcely dry on the written paper submitted to the committee when he withdrew the "moral embargo" that had rested upon Russia, and apparently Russia was as white as snow and her sins were forgotten and forgiven. . . . If anything were wanting to show the hollowness and the pretext of this bill it is found in the recent Russian incident, where the United States condoned every Russian crime, and forgave her every unrighteous grab of weaker neighbors.⁵¹

Other Aspects of Committee Inquiries into Soviet Policy

Both Hiram Johnson in the Senate and Karl Mundt in the House employed a line of questioning during the hearings which was directed

49. Committee on Foreign Affairs, *To Promote the Defense of the United States, Minority Views*. H. Rp. 18, 77th Cong., 1st Sess., Pt. 2, p. 3.

50. Committee on Foreign Relations, *Promoting the Defense of the United States*, S. Rp. 45, 77th Cong., 1st Sess. (1941), p. 5.

51. Committee on Foreign Relations, *Promoting the Defense of the United States, Minority Views*. S. Rp. 45, 77th Cong., 1st Sess., Pt. 2, pp. 2-3.

toward making out a case that the U.S.S.R. was a part of the Axis coalition. From that point the charge could be made that the embargo removal and the purchase of gold by the Treasury from Russia not only enabled the U.S.S.R. better to aid Germany but was indicative of a hypocritical policy on the part of the supporters of the Lend-Lease Bill.⁵²

Numerous opponents of H.R. 1776 took the opportunity to accuse the administration of working for a "deal" with the Soviet Union and to reason that the bill should be voted down because, among other evils, it would facilitate this reprehensible objective. This was the burden of a prepared statement read to the Foreign Relations Committee by Dr. Herbert Wright, Professor of International Law at the Catholic University, Washington, D.C. Dr. Wright saw the future disposal of defense articles to the U.S.S.R. as "foreshadowed in the recent lifting of the moral embargo" and went on to warn that the Soviet government was utterly untrustworthy.⁵³

Dr. Wright was followed by Gerald L. K. Smith, who appeared as national chairman of the Committee of One Million. According to Smith his organization was receiving great volumes of mail from Roman Catholics who expressed "great apprehension because of the President's semifriendly attitude toward the Soviet Union, the archenemy of the Christian religion." He urged upon the committee the thesis that "religious people" could never have any confidence in the lend-lease program "as long as there is any thought that the passing of such legislation would give the President the power to contribute directly or indirectly to the strength of Soviet Russia." The American people—in whose minds Smith was trying to implant, apparently, precisely this thought—actually "fear," he continued, "that the lifting of this embargo presages a secret alliance between Britain, Russia, and America." He insisted that it was necessary for Congress to act to remove this fear.⁵⁴

The Senate Committee was to hear this same charge of nefarious plans within the administration to form a secret alliance with Soviet Russia voiced in the course of vehement denunciations of lend-lease made by spokesmen for the Youth Committee Against War,⁵⁵ the Women's National Committee to Keep the United States Out of War,⁵⁶ the Anti-war Crusade of the International Catholic Truth Society,⁵⁷ and by William J. Goodwin, a Democratic party leader from Queens County, New York.⁵⁸

52. House, *Lend-Lease Hearings*, pp. 74, 343.

53. Senate, *Lend-Lease Hearings*, Pt. 2, pp. 445-46.

54. *Ibid.*, pp. 469-70.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 819.

56. *Ibid.*, pp. 649-51.

57. *Ibid.*, pp. 632-33.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 828.

The leading isolationist group, America First, did not give any indication of such preoccupation with the Soviet Union. General Wood, the national chairman, did denounce the provisions of Section 3 (a)(1).⁵⁹ Charles A. Lindbergh insisted to Senator Pepper that, "internally," America was not endangered any more by Hitler than it was by Stalin, and he reiterated his oft-repeated conviction that the "internal danger" was the greatest one faced.⁶⁰

A final aspect of the utilization of Soviet Russia as a spring-board from which to attack the Lend-Lease Bill was a point made by Ambassador Joseph P. Kennedy. It was his view, expressed first in his radio broadcast of January 19 and discussed at some length when he appeared before the House Committee, that the Soviet Union was following a policy of waiting for the democracies and the Axis to exhaust one another, at which time the communization of Europe could begin. Precisely this danger was cited by Kennedy as a telling argument against U.S. entry into the war.⁶¹ This same image of Russia was expressed in the House Committee by Mrs. Edith Rogers (R., Ohio) and Charles Eaton (R., N.J.),⁶² and it was to be repeated by anti-lend-lease witnesses before the Senate Committee.⁶³ These contentions were prophetic of one of the principal isolationist arguments to be made during the summer in opposition to the Soviet aid program.

All efforts of the opposition to block the Lend-Lease Bill in committee, or to attach to it crippling amendments, were defeated by the solid administration majorities. This included Tinkham's effort to attach an amendment excluding the U.S.S.R. from participation under lend-lease operations, which the House Committee voted down on January 29.⁶⁴

In countering these opposition efforts, however, and in responding to the criticisms and charges made concerning U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union, the administration's supporters employed a passive defense. Cabinet members' comments in this respect have been noted. Secretary Hull refused to be drawn into a discussion of Soviet conquests, and when asked if lend-lease aid might be given to the Soviet Union he dismissed the ques-

59. *Ibid.*, pp. 368-69.

60. *Ibid.*, pp. 530-31.

61. House, *Lend-Lease Hearings*, p. 240.

62. *Ibid.*, pp. 499, 596. Eaton raised this point during the appearance before the committee of the former Ambassador to the Soviet Union, William C. Bullitt. Bullitt, an outspoken proponent of the Lend-Lease Bill, did not doubt that the Kremlin had this goal in mind, but he expressed the view that communism was so wretched a system, and so severely "inefficient," that there was little danger of its ever being able to dominate "any strong state."

63. See the previously cited testimony of Dr. Herbert Wright, Senate, *Lend-Lease Hearings*, Pt. 2, p. 445.

64. Robert C. Albright, *Washington Post*, January 20, 1941, p. 1.

tion as "hypothetical." Secretaries Stimson and Knox were perhaps more candid. They frankly admitted that aid could be given to the U.S.S.R. under the terms of Section 3 (a) (1), but within that context they insisted that this would take place only if the President deemed such action to be in the interests of the defense of the U.S. Stimson also warned of the diplomatic complications that would follow in the wake of a Congressional proviso excluding Russia by name.

Committee members who supported the bill, like those who came to testify in its behalf, were not disposed to inject questions pertaining to the Soviet Union into the proceedings. In the Foreign Affairs Committee, Representative Shanley (D., Conn.), after listening to repeated criticisms of the embargo removal, felt constrained to remind the group that lifting the embargo had not cancelled the strict system of priority regulations and the export licensing system. He therefore saw no particular importance in the embargo action.⁶⁵ With this one exception, the committee supporters of the bill were disposed to follow Secretary Hull's lead and ignore questions and criticisms pertaining to the Soviet Union.

The nettle was more firmly grasped in the Foreign Relations Committee, though there too only after the opposition had in some manner brought the subject of Russia into the discussions. Senator Pepper (D., Fla.) was the most forthright. Following Vandenberg's interrogation of Stimson with respect to the implications of Section 3 (a)(1), Pepper commented that he saw no reason why the U.S. should try to "offend" Russia. He then remarked: "And if Russia desired to lend her great aid to the resistance of the encroachments of these Axis Powers, I am sure the rest of the world would look with some favor upon it. At least we would." Stimson was not asked to reply.⁶⁶

Several days after this, when Dr. Herbert Wright made his appearance, the Catholic University professor recited a long record of Soviet treachery to underscore the dangers of any association with the Soviet Union. Senator Green (D., R.I.) asked Wright why he was so concerned with Soviet "breaches of faith" and made no mention of the record of Nazi Germany in this respect.⁶⁷ Then Senator Connally (D., Tex.), after a discourse by Merwin K. Hart upon the dangers of communism, inquired why Hart believed it was necessary that the U.S. spend several billions each year on national defense. Hart insisted that Russia, like Germany and Japan, was a "very dangerous factor," but Connally had made his point.⁶⁸

65. House, *Lend-Lease Hearings*, p. 603.

66. Senate, *Lend-Lease Hearings*, Pt. 1, p. 21.

67. *Ibid.*, Pt. 2, p. 459.

68. *Ibid.*, p. 750.

The statements of these men—Shanley, Pepper, Green, and Connally—constituted the sum total of the defense offered by committee members for the policies being pursued toward Soviet Russia. Obviously it was a subject which, while of marginal importance to the lend-lease debate itself, the defenders of lend-lease were not disposed to discuss.

The House Debates and the Tinkham Amendment

The Lend-Lease Bill was reported out of the Foreign Affairs Committee on January 29. Debate began on February 3 and, so far as the question of Soviet policy was concerned, followed substantially the same pattern as in the committee deliberations. On the first day of the debates, Congressman Fish (R., N.Y.), probably the foremost oracle of isolationism in the House, fired the opening shot. Never modest in his attacks upon the Roosevelt foreign policies, Fish expressed the belief that it had been U.S. "assurances" of a repeal of the arms embargo that had induced Britain and France to fight in 1939. In the absence of those assurances, he opined that the Danzig question could have been settled and that the war "if it had taken place . . . would have been in the direction of the Ukraine and Soviet Russia."⁶⁹

Representative Blackney (R., Mich.) came more directly to the point the same day in the course of a long speech in opposition to H.R. 1776. His concern was over the lifting of the moral embargo and the "secret negotiations" being carried on with the Soviets.⁷⁰ During the ensuing week of debate the House was to hear variations on this same theme sounded in the opposition speeches. Representatives Jonkman (R., Mich.),⁷¹ Robsion (R., Ky.),⁷² Van Zandt (R., Pa.),⁷³ and Bradley (R., Mich.)⁷⁴ scored the fact that the bill as reported enabled the President to aid even Russia if he desired. Representatives Canfield (R., N.J.)⁷⁵ and Youngdahl (R., Minn.)⁷⁶ attacked the lifting of the moral embargo, contending that such a step was wholly inconsistent with the professed policy of halting the march of armed aggression. Congressman Frederick C. Smith (R., Ohio) charged in an address broadcast over the CBS network that, in view of "the President's erstwhile friendliness to Russia," he could not help but wonder if the Soviet dictatorship was not scheduled for possible aid under the bill.⁷⁷

Efforts were made by the opponents of lend-lease—in the House of Representatives by Fish and Mundt—to have substituted for that far-

69. *Congressional Record*, LXXXVII, 488.

71. *Ibid.*, pp. 528-30.

73. *Ibid.*, p. 589.

75. *Ibid.*, p. 566.

77. The text of Smith's address is *ibid.*, pp. A230-31.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 509.

72. *Ibid.*, p. 560.

74. *Ibid.*, p. 678.

76. *Ibid.*, p. 648.

reaching measure the authorization of a \$2 billion credit to Great Britain. It remained for Congressman Tinkham to put the issue of assisting Russia directly before the House, as he had done in the Foreign Affairs Committee. On February 7, in the closing stages of the debates, he rose to introduce an amendment which would have authorized the President to procure and transfer defense articles "for the Government of any country *other than* the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, whose defense the President deems vital to the defense of the United States."⁷⁸

In adducing supporting arguments for his amendment, Tinkham made the usual attacks upon the nature and character of the Soviet government, branding it as the "enemy of civilization, the persecutor of religion," and the "arsenal of Germany." He ended his speech by attempting to attach the onus of pro-Communist sympathies upon any who opposed his amendment, warning the House that if it were not adopted "substance is given to the charge which has been made that the present administration favors communism and collectivism and that the membership of the House, or a majority of the membership of the House, favor communism and collectivism."⁷⁹

Representative Robsion (R., Ky.) then took the floor to endorse the Tinkham amendment. His remarks consisted of a heated denunciation of the Soviet government, Communist ideology, and the removal of the moral embargo.⁸⁰

Luther A. Johnson (D., Tex.) assumed responsibility for speaking against Tinkham's proposal. He cogently stated the position of the administration and its supporters, saying to the House:

This is not the place and this is not the hour in passing legislation affecting the peace of the world and the security of the United States to write into any bill an amendment which is merely a gratuitous slap at a country which at this time is doing nothing against us. The Axis Powers of Germany, Italy, and Japan are the only powers that have banded themselves together and made threats against us and the other democracies of the world, and I think we should be foolish to brand Russia as an enemy when she is holding herself aloof from our declared enemies.

After reading from the controversial Section 3, Johnson continued:

No one contemplates that at this time or within the life of this bill . . . we will be called upon to grant any aid to Russia. But because that is true,

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, p. 761.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 761-62. According to the *New York Times* (February 8, 1941, p. 1), Tinkham was so agitated that he occasionally wandered away from the microphone and succeeded, at least, in shaking the House "out of its doldrums."

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 762-63.

is it prudent, is it statesmanlike to slap Russia in the face when at this time she is not a part of the Axis Powers that have threatened us? . . . Do we want to give them a kick and put them in the enemy's camp?⁸¹

Democratic Floor Leader McCormack (Mass.) endorsed Johnson's plea, and Representative Magnuson (D., Wash.) urged the House to be "practical" and face the fact that, in his words, "Russia is our only buffer in the Orient against Japanese aggression." Casey (D., Mass.) rose to ask Johnson if it were not true that the amendment would impede British efforts to secure Soviet help against Germany, and Johnson agreed that this would be the case. Fish then asked Johnson if he made "any distinction between aggressor nations," but to this Johnson made no reply.⁸² With that the debate over the Tinkham amendment terminated and it was brought to a vote. On a rising vote the chair counted 76 "ayes" and 116 "nays." Tinkham then called for a teller vote, and the result was 94 "ayes" against 185 "nays."⁸³ The following day, February 8, on a roll-call vote, the House passed the Lend-Lease Bill by a vote of 260 to 165.

The Senate Debates and the Reynolds Amendment

In the Senate also the opponents of lend-lease placed great stress upon the thesis that the bill made a dangerous surrender of legislative authority to the Chief Executive. Once more an attempt was made to substitute for the Lend-Lease Bill an authorization for a credit. Senator Taft (R., Ohio) took the lead in the effort, proposing that the Senate grant to Great Britain, Canada, and Greece loans for the procurement of war materials in the U.S. to a total of \$2 billion.⁸⁴ The Republican leader stated the case for such a step in an important address to the New York Bar Association on January 25. Reminding the gathered members of the legal profession that H.R. 1776 was not confined to authorizing the President to aid the United Kingdom, he stated:

Under it [the Lend-Lease Bill] the President might be expected to build up a Russian Army or we might send our finest tanks to Greece. The effect of such a procedure on aid to Britain is necessarily remote and may be exceedingly dangerous, for we cannot be certain that these countries will not collapse or turn against us. Already the Administration has lifted the moral embargo on airplanes and airplane parts to Russia, although no one can possibly guess where Russia may stand by the time this equipment arrives there.

81. *Ibid.*, p. 763.

82. *Ibid.*

83. *Ibid.*, p. 764.

84. Taft formally introduced his substitute bill on February 22. See *ibid.*, p. 1276.

Taft concluded by conceding that the U.S. could take a chance on England. The proper way to do this was to make a loan which would include Canada and perhaps Greece. As for China and the countries of Latin America, in such purchases as they might need to make they could work through the Export-Import Bank.⁸⁵

In the floor debates in the upper chamber, as in the committee hearings, it was Senator Vandenberg who took the lead in attacking the sweeping delegation of power which the bill made and in linking this to the subject of Soviet Russia. In the course of a long address to the Senate on February 18, Vandenberg delivered this indictment:

This is license to arm half the earth out of our arsenals—at a moment of grave danger. . . . And arming the world is but a short step from attempting to police it. Why, we may even find ourselves arming Russia, in the name of aiding democracy—God save the mark—if she temporarily leans our way; just as we flung an orchid to Moscow 3 weeks ago when we lifted our “moral embargo” against Russia, although our State Department has charged Russia with flagrant violation of her pledge with respect to non-interference in our internal affairs, and although we are the only country in the Western Hemisphere which accords her the official sanctuary of official recognition.⁸⁶

The following day Senator Reynolds (D., N.C.) deprecated the great fear of Hitler in some quarters, proceeded to cite Soviet persecution of religion, and then accused the administration of “making violent, ardent love” to Joseph Stalin.⁸⁷ Senator McCarran (D., Nev.), in his turn, warned that lend-lease would take America into the war and that the outcome would be the spread of communism. Stalin’s purpose, he charged, was to wait until the capitalist nations had destroyed one another, whereupon bolshevism would easily devour them all.⁸⁸ Senator Nye in his numerous and lengthy declamations against the bill made the same point,⁸⁹ and Senator Wheeler contributed a letter from the Church League of America which attacked the inconsistency of supporting lend-lease while countenancing the shipment of defense supplies to Soviet Russia.⁹⁰ Senator Clark of Idaho joined in by charging that every atrocity that the proponents of lend-lease attributed to the Nazis in their occupation of Poland could, with equal justice, be attributed to the Russians in their occupation of eastern Poland and the Baltic states. Chavez (D., N.M.) said that he was inclined to believe that Clark was correct. Senator Barkley replied by saying that the evidence given by church leaders, and other reliable sources, made all too plain the

85. *Ibid.*, p. 1104.

87. *Ibid.*, p. 1211.

89. *Ibid.*, p. 1413.

86. *Ibid.*, p. 1104.

88. *Ibid.*, p. 1270.

90. *Ibid.*, p. 1492.

course of Nazi occupation policies but that there was no basis for assuming the same things were happening in areas ruled by the Soviet Union.⁹¹

On March 3 Senator Reynolds followed in the footsteps of Representative Tinkham and placed the Russian question directly before the Senate. America, said the Senator, should be concerned with the domestic inroads of foreign "isms" rather than combating them abroad. Communism was almost certain to triumph in Europe after the war, even in England, and he depicted Stalin as a "vulture" hovering over the war-torn Continent. Russia desired that the U.S. enter the war, he continued, in order better to subvert the capitalistic system. Unfortunately, Reynolds asserted, the American government was "tolerating communistic agitation throughout the entire nation." Then he came to the point.

I am confident Russia is aiding Germany indirectly, if not directly, and to the end that Germany may not receive any aid from us indirectly through Russia, I am now submitting an amendment to H.R. 1776 which would prohibit this country providing any aid to Soviet Russia. The amendment reads: Nothing in this act . . . shall be construed to authorize or permit the authorization or granting of any aid to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.⁹²

Before taking his seat the North Carolinian had introduced further amendments which, if enacted into law, would have ordered the deportation of Harry Bridges and forbidden the employment by the federal government of any "Communist, Nazi, or Fascist." There was no discussion of any of the amendments, save by Reynolds himself, though Brewster (R., Me.) and Clark (D., Mo.) asked some questions designed to encourage Reynolds along the way.⁹³

On March 7, without any further debate, the amendment to prohibit any aid to the Soviet Union was brought to a vote. On roll call, thirty-five senators voted in favor of the amendment and fifty-six voted against it.⁹⁴ The following day the Senate enacted lend-lease, and on March 11, after the House had agreed to certain Senate amendments, the President signed the bill into law.

Analyzing the Congressional Debates

There is evidence that the injection of this issue into the lend-lease controversy was little more than a stratagem employed by the opposition in marshalling its case against the bill. The President was making a

91. *Ibid.*, pp. 1296-97.

93. *Ibid.*, pp. 1648-50.

92. *Ibid.*, pp. 1644-45.

94. *Ibid.*, p. 1984.

request for powers that were, without doubt, unprecedented in their nature. A strong and vocal minority in and out of Congress was profoundly distrustful of his foreign policy, convinced that he was taking the country into war. These suspicions were fortified by a strong current of antagonism toward his conception of the office of the President and his utilization of the powers of that office over a period of eight years.

The confluence of events was such that, at the time lend-lease was placed before Congress, American diplomatic authorities were endeavoring to pursue a line of action which, at the least, would avoid driving the Soviet Union closer to the Axis. The diplomatic endeavor was obviously vulnerable to attack insofar as it necessitated—as it was bound to do—any manifestation of friendly relations with the U.S.S.R. Soviet collaboration with Germany, Soviet territorial expansion during 1939-41, and a long tradition of American hostility to communism meant that these American diplomatic efforts were not conducive to popular endorsement or understanding. When administration officials refrained from verbal attacks upon Soviet aggression, and when, on January 21, the lifting of the moral embargo was announced, an additional avenue of attack upon lend-lease was open to the opposition.

In the hearings before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, the subject of Russia was invariably introduced into the deliberations by those who sought the defeat of the Lend-Lease Bill. A roll-call vote was not taken in the House itself when the Tinkham amendment was acted upon, but the evidence clearly points to the fact that there was no significant differentiation between the supporters of the amendment and the opponents of lend-lease. Thus, in the course of the House debates, fourteen members took the opportunity to assail the Soviet Union and American policy toward that nation. These members were, in order:

Fish (R., N.Y.)	Woodruff (R., Mich.)
Blackney (R., Mich.)	Youngdahl (R., Minn.)
Van Zandt (R., Pa.)	Tinkham (R., Mass.)
Jonkman (R., Mich.)	Mundt (R., S.D.)
Rich (R., Pa.)	Mrs. Rogers (R., Mass.)
Robsion (R., Ky.)	Curtis (R., Neb.)
Canfield (R., N.J.)	Smith (R., Ohio)

Each of these members was speaking in opposition to lend-lease, and each cast his vote against it.

Luther Johnson, who directed the debates for the majority in the absence of Sol Bloom, took to the floor to speak against the Tinkham amendment. He rested his case on the argument that it was senseless

and pointless—since no one contemplated that Russia would ever be aided anyway—to “kick” Russia further into the Axis camp. Three administration supporters rose to make some brief comment endorsing Johnson’s remarks. Representative Tarver (D., Ga.) was the only proponent of lend-lease to indicate in the course of his remarks on the bill that Soviet Russia would be welcomed into the camp of the anti-Axis coalition.⁹⁵

In the Senate hearings also the question of Soviet policy was brought into the discussions by men who voted against lend-lease and who were consistently in opposition to the foreign policies of the Roosevelt administration during 1941. Furthermore, just as in the House, it was this opposition which linked the controversial Section 3 (a)(1) to the question of aid to Russia. The private individuals and spokesmen who injected Russian relations into their testimony before the committees were, invariably, appearing as witnesses against the bill.

During the floor debates it was again the opposition that raised the subject of Russia. Administration spokesmen remained silent on the matter, not even feeling it necessary to speak directly on the Reynolds amendment. When this amendment was brought to a vote, thirty-five members supported it. They were:

Aiken (R., Vt.)	LaFollette (P., Wis.)
Ball (R., Minn.)	Langer (R., N.D.)
Brewster (R., Me.)	Lodge (R., Mass.)
Bridges (R., Ill.)	McCarran (D., Nev.)
Brooks (R., Ill.)	McNary (R., Ore.)
Brown (D., Mich.)	Nye (R., N.D.)
Bulow (D., S.D.)	Reynolds (D., N.C.)
Burton (R., Ohio)	Shipstead (R., Minn.)
Butler (R., Neb.)	Taft (R., Ohio)
Capper (R., Kan.)	Thomas (R., Idaho)
Clark (D., Mo.)	Tobey (R., N.H.)
Clark (D., Idaho)	Vandenberg (R., Mich.)
Danaher (R., Conn.)	Walsh (D., Mass.)
Davis (R., Pa.)	Wheeler (D., Mont.)
Gurney (R., S.D.)	White (R., Me.)
Holman (R., Ore.)	Wiley (R., Wis.)
Johnson (D., Colo.)	Willis (R., Ind.)
Johnson (R., Calif.)	

95. *Ibid.*, p. 554.

Twenty-six of these—or 74.29 per cent—voted against the Lend-Lease Act. The nine who supported the Reynolds amendment to exclude the Soviet Union from any lend-lease assistance and then voted to enact the Lend-Lease Bill were Ball, Brewster, Bridges, Brown, Burton, Gurney, Lodge, McNary, and White. It is noteworthy, first, that Senator Brown was the only Democrat in the group; and, second, that four of the nine—Brewster, Burton, Lodge, and McNary—supported the substitute bill offered by Taft, which would have authorized the making of loans up to a total of \$2 billion to Britain, Canada, and Greece.⁹⁶ It would appear that only the remaining five could be classified as firm supporters of lend-lease and advocates of excluding Soviet Russia from its provisions.

The legislators who introduced the anti-Soviet amendments were, in both instances, extreme isolationists. Both were also renowned as exponents of the view that the nation faced a serious menace in the activities of domestic Communists. Representative Tinkham was something of a fanatic both in his enmity toward Soviet Russia and in his antipathy for the foreign policies of Roosevelt and Hull. Senator Reynolds in the summer of 1940 had introduced a bill to outlaw the Communist party along with the German Bund. Both men, in their speeches stating the arguments for their amendments, were speaking in a manner wholly characteristic. Both had few peers in the bitterness of their opposition to lend-lease.

The conclusion seems inescapable that the issue of aiding Russia was introduced into the debates of January-March merely as a means of adding one additional avenue of attack upon the Lend-Lease Bill by those who were determined to oppose the measure with or without such a limitation. It provided a more direct approach through which to attack some of the powers delegated to the President by the act. Certainly it was not a new development for Roosevelt's opponents to assail him for seeking "dictatorial" powers and to charge his administration with excessive tolerance for Soviet Russia and communism.

As to what degree the administration found it necessary to intervene in order to mobilize its supporters in Congress to defeat the moves to bar Russia from lend-lease, there can be no specific answer. But it is clear that the administration was in control throughout the debates. In each instance, amendments which would have seriously obstructed the authority requested were defeated.⁹⁷ There were compro-

96. On the Taft substitute, see *ibid.*, pp. 2080-82.

97. See the comments of Turner Catledge, *New York Times*, January 23, 1941, Sec. IV, p. 7; and those of Robert C. Albright, *Washington Post*, January 30, 1941, p. 1.

mises but no surrenders. So concerned was the Democratic majority on the Foreign Affairs Committee to see that the bill conformed to the President's policies that it largely turned over the job of writing its report to the House to Oscar Cox, the Treasury lawyer who had helped to draft the bill. There can be little doubt that the Democratic leadership in both houses was made aware of the fact that either the Tinkham or Reynolds amendment would have been embarrassing to the diplomacy of the U.S. A prudent regard for public sensibilities dictated that as little as possible be said on the point, but when the issue was put to a vote a solid majority was readily mobilized.

In retrospect, it would appear that the opponents of lend-lease made a tactical error in bringing in the question of aiding Russia at that point. It was, after all, an abstract point at the time. In forcing the issue, however, and losing, the opposition had helped to undermine the strength of its own position when, in the summer of that year, the question of aid to the Soviet Union became a vital foreign policy issue. In a sense the January-March debates were prophetic in both tenor and results.

THE PUBLIC, THE LEND-LEASE DEBATES, AND SOVIET RUSSIA

That the opposition erred in introducing the Soviet issue is further borne out by the public reaction—or rather, the lack of reaction—to the move. The press hardly noticed this seemingly highly provisional question. A reading of the extensive coverage of the lend-lease debates in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* fails to disclose any concern with the issue of Soviet Russia in this connection, other than the mere fact of reporting the debates and vote on the Tinkham and Reynolds amendments. In the syndicated columns of Joseph Alsop and Robert Kintner, Walter Lippmann, Mark Sullivan, Ernest K. Lindley, and Dorothy Thompson, there was a conspicuous absence of any interest in the question of Soviet Russia. The same is true in the editorials on the Lend-Lease Bill in such conservative organs as the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Commercial and Financial Chronicle*. Both of these papers were long-standing critics of the domestic and foreign policies of the Roosevelt administration. To the *Wall Street Journal*, H.R. 1776 was “simply fantastic,” so much so that it did not understand how Congress could “seriously consider passing a bill so dangerous to the United States.”⁹⁸ The *Chronicle* was of the same mind and expressed the opinion that the bill was a classic illustration of “the real nature of most of what has been going on in this country during the past eight years.”⁹⁹

⁹⁸ January 11, 1941, p. 4.

⁹⁹ March 8, 1941, p. 1473.

But, in the face of the burning questions of convoys, of the limits of presidential prerogative, and other more immediate issues, neither of these influential conservative organs displayed any interest in the hypothetical problem of aiding Soviet Russia.

There was a segment of opinion, to be sure, which held that communism and Soviet Russia were the major enemies of the American democracy. The Reverend Robert I. Gannon, President of Fordham University, exemplified this outlook in a speech to the Real Estate Board of New York on February 1, 1941. The Germans were, after all, "Europeans," the Catholic clergyman declared, and he predicted that one day they would wake up and be ashamed of their crimes. But "our principal enemy," he warned, was the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁰ Some of those who testified against lend-lease would have cordially agreed with this estimate, but this consideration added little to the zeal with which they fought for the defeat of lend-lease.

Certainly the great majority of the general public, all the evidence indicates, strongly endorsed the policy of aid to Britain,¹⁰¹ and it was in this light that it saw lend-lease. The American people had been profoundly shaken by the apparently invincible power of German arms. As for Soviet Russia, there was enmity but not fear. Its conquests lacked the more awesome and frightening characteristics of the Nazi military machine. A striking commentary on this fact was made by the editors of *Fortune* magazine on the eve of the Russo-German war later that year. Looking back over opinion samplings of American attitudes toward the U.S.S.R., *Fortune* observed that the American people were disposed to dismiss the Soviet Union

... as an undependable and somehow negligible factor in world affairs. In the dark mental spiral of public attitude hostile disillusionment toward the Soviet Union had chilled down to tepid indifference. Soviet Russia was trying to play both ends against the middle and to hell with it. It was too weak to resist Germany anyway. Turn its picture to the wall.¹⁰²

It is understandable that, to the general public, a debate over the seemingly hypothetical issue of Soviet participation in the lend-lease program was a matter of little consequence in the opening months of 1941.

Thus, the Lend-Lease Bill became law with the authority to determine the recipients of U.S. aid left in the hands of the President. Not

100. *New York Times*, February 2, 1941, p. 23.

101. See the poll results in Hadley Cantrill (ed.), *Public Opinion, 1935-1946* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), especially at pp. 410-11.

102. "Soviet Industry," *Fortune*, XXIV (July, 1941), 61.

only had Section 3 (a) (1) survived all attacks, but Congress had specifically voted down by substantial margins proposals to exclude the Soviet Union from its compass. Events were to show that these were fateful decisions.

III.

Diverging Lines of Policy, March-June

THE RUSSIAN ENIGMA

THERE WAS A distinct note of irony in the image of U.S.-Soviet relations projected by the Congressional opponents of lend-lease during the legislative debates. Certainly the image was a distorted one. In the weeks following the lifting of the moral embargo, trade relations between the two nations actually worsened. The "secret negotiations" conducted by Under-Secretary Welles continued, but these often consisted of little more than wearisome exchanges covering the same ground again and again, interspersed with a curious blend of comments both caustic and conciliatory. Oumansky did partially comply with Welles's request of February 24, delivering the assurances of his government on March 1 that no American goods were being re-exported to Germany.¹ This scarcely constituted an iron-clad guarantee, however, nor did it make the bases of political agreement less remote. Only two days previous to his delivery of this statement Oumansky had again asked for American recognition of the demise of the Baltic states, provoking Welles to remark that the U.S. would never attempt "to purchase the friendship of any country by recognizing rights which it did not regard as legitimate and justifiable." The Ambassador retorted that Soviet friendship was not for sale.² And so it went.

The Limitations of Foreign Policy

While relations with the Soviet Union were not matters of urgent priority in the multitude of problems facing the American policy-makers in the early spring of 1941, they certainly must be ranked among the

1. *Department of State Bulletin*, IV (1941), 227.

2. Quoted in Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 341.

most perplexing. It will be useful here to attempt a reconstruction of the general situation which they confronted.

The decision-makers knew that the German war lords were carefully making plans for an invasion of the Soviet Union during the late spring. They could not ignore the fact, however, that "Barbarossa" was only a plan and therefore susceptible to alteration. There was no concrete assurance that Hitler might not still be appeased for some time longer, if Moscow were willing to pay a price sufficiently high.

American policy-makers were mindful of the fact that a critical juncture had been reached in the Balkans. German troops marched into Sofia on March 2, after Bulgaria announced its adherence to the Axis. Rumania had already fallen under German domination, and the shadow of the swastika hung menacingly over Yugoslavia. These were developments that could not leave Moscow unmoved. Nor could the Far East be forgotten. The American officials knew that Foreign Minister Matsuoka was soon to begin his journey to Moscow and Berlin and that he was in quest of an agreement with the U.S.S.R. which would release Japan for advances to the south.

It was no simple task to draw from this convergence of events a policy prescription with respect to the Soviet Union. Walter Lippmann addressed himself to the problem early in March, in one of his syndicated columns. There could be little doubt that, as he observed, the "supreme preoccupation" of Soviet diplomacy was to avoid a trial by combat with Nazi Germany.

The course of Russia [continued Lippmann] will not be determined, we may be sure, by small concessions by Great Britain and the United States or by diplomatic hypocrisy about Russia's own offenses against the moral order. Russia's course will be determined by Stalin's desire to survive. He will appease Hitler unless a time arrives when he can and must defend himself by force of arms. . . .³

Within this context, was there any means through which the U.S. might influence, in its own interests, the decisions of the Soviet government? Was there any feasible line of action that might hasten a realignment of the Soviet Union to the detriment of the Germans and Japanese? Or did the initiative rest wholly in Berlin, Moscow, and Tokyo?

Lippmann argued that events could be influenced by a rigid enforcement of the blockade against the U.S.S.R. and a halt in the release of U.S. goods for shipment to Russia. He felt that this would lessen Russia's ability to supply Germany's urgent needs and speed a reckoning between

3. *Washington Post*, March 6, 1941, p. 11.

Hitler and Stalin. Most editorial writers seemed to agree that the situation called for a "tough" policy.

The American policy-makers were reluctant to embark upon any such course as this, since it would have meant the imposition of an embargo against Russia. They were anxious, as Hull had remarked to Lord Halifax, not to "tip the scales" at Moscow, to avoid any steps which might push Moscow closer to the Axis. They preferred, rather, to drift along on the route already being followed, marking time and watching developments. As long as it entailed no concessions that might touch upon major interests and vital principles, it was deemed more prudent to avoid giving offense to the Soviet government.

Within this framework, the conduct of Soviet relations continued. The White House was asked, in early March, through Harry Hopkins, to prescribe some policy guidelines in the matter of Soviet purchasing operations.⁴ This was no critical problem, but it was one to which the Russians attached great importance and one which was productive of considerable ill-feeling on their part. This was a matter incapable of precise settlement in detail, but to the Department of State was assigned the responsibility of issuing clearances on Soviet export applications. There the general policy was laid down that, on finished articles, permission for export to Russia would be given if the articles in question were not needed in connection with the defense program or by a government receiving lend-lease assistance.⁵ This directive certainly did not dissolve all the difficulties involved in this complex situation nor did it afford satisfaction to the demanding Russians. On the other hand, it avoided any decisive break. Oumansky's complaints multiplied in volume during the spring, and the conversations with Welles came to a virtual standstill. The Soviet diplomat was undeceived, however, as to the American position on these matters. As Welles told him on March 22, the U.S. desired better relations with the Soviet Union, but it would never consent to assist in purchasing operations that might benefit Germany.⁶

Oumansky Is Told of Operation "Barbarossa"

A more important decision, it must have seemed at the time, was to be made with respect to Washington's knowledge of Operation "Bar-

4. Memoranda, Philip Young to Harry Hopkins, March 3, 1941, and March 7, 1941 (Office of Lend-Lease Administration [hereinafter OLLA], Russia File). These pointed to the need for some high-level decisions and coordination of policy with respect to the Soviet orders.

5. "Memorandum for the Guidance of Appropriate Officers in Reviewing Russian Orders," April 11, 1941. Prepared in the office of Assistant Secretary of State Acheson (811.20 (D) Regulations 6752).

6. Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 343.

barossa." Considering the course of Soviet policy and the character of Soviet diplomacy, it was difficult to determine how this knowledge could best be utilized. Late in February, despite the unsatisfactory state of Soviet-American relations, the President and his advisers decided to communicate this information to the Russians.

By that time, of course, rumors of a German war with Russia were quite freely circulating in Europe. As early as February 6, the United States Minister to Rumania had sent a lengthy dispatch to the Secretary of State and the President, analyzing the rumors and the state of German-Soviet relations. He concluded that "the balance tips in favor of an early war between Germany and Russia."⁷ All things considered, it seemed to the officials in Washington that nothing could be lost in communicating the fateful tidings to the Kremlin.

Accordingly, Secretary Hull on March 1 sent the necessary instructions to Ambassador Laurence Steinhardt in Moscow. The Ambassador was asked to request an "urgent interview" with Foreign Minister Molotov and confidentially to relay to him substantially this message:

The Government of the U.S., while endeavoring to estimate the developing world situation, has come into the possession of information which it regards as authentic clearly indicating that it is the intention of Germany to attack the Soviet Union in the not distant future. It would appear that the plan to attack the Soviet Union is contingent upon the extent to which England, supported by American endeavor, will be able to oppose not only the military strength but also the economic efforts of Germany.

You may add it is only after considerable hesitation that your Government has authorized you to convey this information but your Government has felt that it would not be to the common interest of the countries which have thus far succeeded in maintaining political and economic independence in the face of German aggression for it to remain silent while in possession of such important information.⁸

These instructions were not mandatory. If he deemed such action unwise, the Ambassador was given the opportunity to express his own thoughts on the matter.

This Steinhardt did in a telegram to Hull on March 3. His analysis of the possible dangers involved in this course of action was a significant commentary on the policy dilemmas being faced. He warned that the Soviets were fully capable of making such a warning the subject of a Tass communique. He felt that if the Kremlin had no supporting in-

7. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1941*. Vol. I, *General, The Soviet Union* (Department of State Publication No. 6642. Washington: 1958), pp. 129-31.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 712-13.

formation of its own in the matter, it would likely see in the warning a British plot of some description. If it did have confirmatory information, Steinhardt was apprehensive of the possible effects that this further intelligence might have upon Soviet policy. It could cause the Soviet rulers, in his opinion, to take such undesirable steps as: (1) striking a bargain with Japan as early as possible; (2) reaching a new agreement with Berlin at the expense of Turkey; (3) attempting to occupy all of Finland; (4) demanding even more in concessions and aid from the U.S.; or, (5) going to even greater lengths to appease Germany.⁹

It happened that Steinhardt did not have to execute this task which seemed to him so ill-advised. The Secretary of State telegraphed him on March 4 that Under-Secretary Welles had passed the information along to Ambassador Oumansky on March 1. Steinhardt was not asked to pursue the matter any further.¹⁰

Welles has written that Oumansky "turned very white" upon hearing these grave tidings.¹¹ A short time later, on March 20, he asked the Under-Secretary if he knew anything further on the matter, and Welles passed on the latest information.¹² Welles observed during that same week that Oumansky appeared to be quite poorly informed by his government as to important aspects of German-Soviet relations,¹³ and in later years he expressed doubt as to whether Oumansky ever relayed the message to Moscow.¹⁴ It seems rather inconsequential, at any rate, for the men in the Kremlin were forewarned from other quarters and had the march of events to instruct them.

A TURNING POINT IN GERMAN-SOVIET RELATIONS

Balkan Maneuvers

Even as Hull and Steinhardt were exchanging messages during the first week of March, the German thrust to the southeast was producing

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 713-14.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 714.

11. Welles, *Time for Decision*, p. 171.

12. *Peace and War: United States Foreign Policy, 1931-1941* (Department of State Publication No. 1983. Washington: 1943), p. 638.

13. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1941*. Vol. IV, *The Far East* (Department of State Publication No. 6325. Washington: 1956), p. 113.

14. Welles so remarked in May of 1947, during an interview with William L. Langer and S. Everett Gleason. See their *Undeclared War*, p. 343. It should be noted also that, in *Time for Decision*, Welles wrote that the "Barbarossa" data had been immediately relayed to Oumansky after its receipt in Washington. This would imply that Oumansky was told late in January. In a conversation with Oumansky on July 3, 1941, in fact, Welles did speak of giving such a warning "in January" (861.24/558½). This is the only document, however, which puts the date before March 1, and any date earlier than that makes the exchange of messages between Hull and Steinhardt on March 1 and March 4 quite inexplicable. The weight of the evidence indicates that Welles's recollection was in error, for although no record has been found of the March 1 conversation between Welles and Oumansky, the references in the Hull message of March 4 and in the Welles-Oumansky conversation of March 20 are certainly unequivocal.

distinct, if halting, reactions from the Soviet government. The first indication of an approaching crisis in German-Soviet relations came on March 3, the day following the announcement that German troops were in Bulgaria. The Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, taking note of these developments, issued a public statement rebuking the Bulgarian government. The Soviet statement served notice that Moscow could not concur in the "correctness" of the Bulgarian explanation, since such action would lead to "the extension of the sphere of the war and to Bulgaria's being involved in it." Consequently, the Soviet Foreign Ministry pontificated, the Soviet Union, "true to its policy of peace," could not support Bulgaria in its policy.¹⁵

Three weeks later, on March 25, the Commissariat once again evinced its concern over Balkan developments. It issued a communique stating that if Turkey were "exposed to aggression," it could "count on the complete understanding of the U.S.S.R."¹⁶ In Washington, Ambassador Oumansky met with Under-Secretary Welles on March 22 and 27 and "indicated vaguely and indefinitely," Welles believed, "that his Government was more apprehensive than it had been with regard to German designs upon the Soviet Union."¹⁷ He also remarked to Welles that, despite the disagreements over trade, "many common denominators may be found in the long-range policy of both the American and Soviet Governments."¹⁸

By this time the crisis in the Balkans was rapidly reaching the boiling point. With Mussolini's armies humiliated by the Greeks and Rumania and Bulgaria joined to the Axis, the course of Yugoslavia assumed pivotal significance. On March 25 the Yugoslav government folded under remorseless pressure from Berlin and signed the Tripartite Pact. Within forty-eight hours, however, that government was overthrown in a brief revolution in Belgrade, while the Yugoslav populace defiantly demonstrated against the Axis. The new regime, headed by General Simovitch, sought desperately to secure Yugoslavia against German retribution and endeavored to negotiate an agreement with Moscow. Fearful itself of German power, the Soviet government was nevertheless moved to make a third and even stronger gesture against Berlin's actions.

15. The text of the March 3 statement is in Jones and Myers (eds.), *Documents on American Foreign Relations*, III, 347-48.

16. Max Beloff, *The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia, 1929-1941* (London: Oxford University Press, for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1949), II, 365. The communique is in *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy*, edited by Jane Degras (London: Oxford University Press and the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1953), III, 484.

17. *Foreign Relations, 1941*, IV, 112.

18. Quoted in Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 344.

On the night of April 5-6, the U.S.S.R. and Yugoslavia signed in Moscow a pact of nonaggression. The pact was much less than what the Yugoslavs desired, but it was given "unusual publicity" in the Soviet press.¹⁹ The ink was scarcely dry when, early on the morning of the sixth, the German army invaded Yugoslavia and Greece. Resistance was valorous, but brief. Yet the German triumph could not erase the diplomatic importance of Moscow's hesitant step.

Reporting the dramatic developments of April 6 to Washington, Ambassador Steinhardt declared that Moscow's purpose in signing the pact had clearly been to "insure Yugoslav resistance to German aggression." He saw the pact as a "turning point" in German-Soviet relations, though he cautioned that there was no reason to expect any follow-through by the Russians or, indeed, any decline in Soviet fulfillment of its supply commitments to Germany.²⁰ Long skeptical of any German-Soviet rift, and thoroughly acclimated to the shifting winds of Soviet policy, even Ambassador Steinhardt had been deeply impressed. On April 12, in another dispatch, he referred to the Soviet actions taken toward Bulgaria, Turkey, and Yugoslavia. He reiterated his belief that "the long anticipated change in the relationship" of Germany and the U.S.S.R. was finally taking place.²¹ As if to underscore his report, the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs that same day issued a statement rebuking Hungary for its participation in the Yugoslav invasion.²²

In Washington, Ambassador Oumansky communicated to the Department of State the nature of his government's reaction to the German drive. He called on Welles on April 9 and, announcing his instructions from Moscow, proceeded to read to the Under-Secretary some Soviet press comment on the Balkan war. The German attack on Yugoslavia was referred to as "unprovoked aggression." After Welles had announced that the U.S. was "gratified" to hear these views, the Ambassador went on to point out how fortunate it would be for both nations if U.S. and Soviet foreign policies were "identical." To illustrate, he remarked that his government desired agreements on economic matters, and he could not refrain from expressing regret over the American position with respect to the Baltic states.²³ The approach of disaster was not to deflect the Russians from their insistence on these points.

19. Beloff, *Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia*, II, 367; and *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy*, III, 484-85.

20. *Foreign Relations*, 1941, I, 136.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 137.

22. Jones and Myers (eds.), *Documents on American Foreign Relations*, III, 331n.

23. Memorandum of conversation, Welles and Oumansky, April 9, 1941 (740.0011 EW1939/10458).

The Soviet-Japanese Pact

As the Balkan war neared its end in mid-April, the world was to witness still another dramatic diplomatic event in the Soviet capital. This was the signing, on April 13, of a neutrality treaty between the U.S.S.R. and Japan.

In mid-March the Japanese Foreign Minister briefly stopped over in Moscow, en route to Berlin and Rome. He engaged in conversations with Soviet officials, exploring the bases for an agreement which might remove any threat to Japan's northern flank. He found the Russians cool and intent upon driving a hard bargain.²⁴

Upon his return to Moscow in April, the mercurial Japanese statesman found the atmosphere considerably changed. The Kremlin seemed quite eager to reach some kind of agreement with Tokyo, even in the absence of any substantial gains. The result was the signing of a treaty pledging each of the two powers to remain neutral in the event the other became engaged in war with another party or parties and a frontier declaration respecting the territorial integrity of Manchukuo and the Mongolian People's Republic. Matsuoka also secretly agreed to reach an agreement on the liquidation of Japanese coal and oil concessions in Northern Sakhalin.²⁵

It seems quite clear that the Kremlin's change in attitude with respect to a settlement with Japan was the consequence of the swiftness of the German conquest of Yugoslavia and Greece. The Russians had apparently hoped that the Balkan campaign would absorb German energies for some time.²⁶ By April 12, the utter collapse of Yugoslav resistance was imminent, and the British and Greeks were in full retreat. These were the events which gave meaning to the treaty of neutrality. Ambassador Steinhardt, on the night of April 13, telegraphed to the Secretary of State:

I believe, however, that the treaty was brought much less by German influence or a desire on the part of Japan to prepare itself for eventual collaboration with Germany in hostilities with the United States than by the fear on the part of Japan that it may become involved in hostilities with the United States against its will and the desire on the part of the Soviet Government to prepare itself against a possible attack by Germany.

24. Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, pp. 356-57.

25. Beloff, *Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia*, II, 373.

26. Indicative, perhaps, of Soviet hopes, was a remark made to Steinhardt on April 2 by Mr. Sobolev, Secretary-General of the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. Observing that the crisis was at hand in the Balkans, Sobolev expressed the view to Steinhardt that the Yugoslavs would put up a good fight if there were no internal dissension. Telegram, Steinhardt to Hull, April 3, 1941 (740.0011 EW1939/9592).

. . . I am of the opinion that the Soviet Government having become convinced of the possibility of an attack by Germany decided to abandon its favorable bargaining position in exchange for an assurance of Japanese neutrality in the event of a German attack on the Soviet Union.²⁷

In short, the Soviet-Japanese treaty was a further indication that German-Soviet relations had indeed reached a "turning point." Stalin was not done with his efforts to postpone a reckoning, but time was running out.

The British Ambassador in Moscow, Stafford Cripps, placed a similar interpretation upon the treaty with Japan. In his diary he wrote that the pact was "anti-German since its only object can be to protect the Russian eastern frontiers in the event of an attack on the west by Germany."²⁸

U.S. Reaction to the Soviet-Japanese Treaty

However accurate these appraisals of the April 13 treaty of neutrality proved to be, the spring of 1941 was to witness a further deterioration in U.S.-Soviet relations. The American public reacted quite strongly against the Soviet agreement with Japan, while the Soviets themselves stubbornly held aloof from any positive gesture toward the Western powers.

Secretary Hull, in a press conference on April 14, hastened to assure the public that the treaty's importance "could be overestimated." He insisted that it left U.S. policy "unchanged."²⁹

The interventionist press, in particular, was disposed to discount Hull's statement and to regard the treaty as a defeat for American policies in the Far East. The *Washington Post* promptly nailed it as a repeat performance of the Nazi-Soviet agreement of 1939. In signing with Tokyo, said the *Post*, "Russia is making herself the accomplice before the fact for further Japanese aggressions in Asia."³⁰ A similar analysis was made by Joseph Alsop and Robert Kintner, who insisted that the treaty made "hash" of U.S. policy and that in denying this the Department of State was "whistling in the dark."³¹ Walter Lippmann felt that Russia had done "what the Axis wants most" by giving assurances to Japan that she need not fear Soviet opposition if she embarked upon a Pacific war.³² The *New York Times* editorialized that no additional proof was needed to demonstrate "the futility of any Washington policy of appeasing Stalin."³³ The *New York Herald-Tribune* was among the few to raise

27. *Foreign Relations, 1941*, IV, 942-43.

28. Quoted in Eric Estorick, *Stafford Cripps: Master Statesman* (New York: The John Day Co., 1949), p. 240.

29. *Department of State Bulletin*, IV (1941), 472.

30. April 14, 1941, p. 8.

31. *Washington Post*, April 16, 1941, p. 13.

32. *Ibid.*, April 15, 1941, p. 13.

33. April 21, 1941, p. 18.

its voice in mild protest to these interpretations. While the pact could be construed as releasing Japan for aggressive steps in the Far East, the *Herald-Tribune* commented that it could be said "with as much justice" that it released Russia to conduct "a more aggressive anti-German policy."³⁴

Congressional reaction to the treaty was limited, but it offered some interesting contrasts. Representative Samuel Weiss (D., Pa.), a supporter of the administration's foreign policy, made an angry speech in the House on April 17 denouncing the Soviet Union. He maintained that the pact made Russia's association with the Axis a "vital active force," and he saw it as "aimed directly at the United States." After alluding to his earlier opposition to the Tinkham amendment to the Lend-Lease Act, Weiss declared:

I contemplate the introduction of legislation which will place Russia in the same category as her Axis partners and deny her any aid whatsoever under H.R. 1776. Further, I believe that we should declare null and void any other trade agreements between Russia and the United States. I feel certain that our President will act accordingly in pursuing his splendid foreign policy.³⁵

Three outstanding isolationists displayed a contrasting mood in commenting to the press on the pact. Senator Burton K. Wheeler remarked that it made Russia's position in the Balkans stronger and improved Japan's position in the Far East. He opined that, since Japan did not want war with the U.S., the treaty was a defeat for Hitler. Hamilton Fish agreed that it signified no danger for the U.S. in the Far East, while Senator Gerald P. Nye felt that it left the U.S. confronting additional perils in Asia only because of the administration's "aggressive" policies in that region.³⁶

GAUGING THE SOVIET POSITION

Despite the generally hostile reaction to the Soviet-Japanese treaty, American policy remained substantially unchanged. Moscow characteristically framed its public utterances for the benefit of Berlin, seeming to add insult to injury. On April 20, for example, *Pravda* published a statement on the Japanese treaty, righteously asserting that it had foiled an Anglo-American plot to embroil the U.S.S.R. in war with Germany and Japan. Referring to the articles of Lippmann and Alsop and Kintner, the Soviet organ testified that American politicians had been seeking to

34. April 14, 1941, p. 16.

35. *Congressional Record*, LXXXVII, 3156.

36. William V. Nessly, *Washington Post*, April 14, 1941, p. 1.

use the U.S.S.R. to "draw their chestnuts out of the fire."³⁷ Only two days previously, in an informal conversation with Loy Henderson of the Division of European Affairs, Ambassador Oumansky had expressed appreciation for the official American attitude toward the treaty and referred to the common U.S.-Soviet interest in assisting the Chinese government against Japan.³⁸ Common interest, however, did not detract from the verity of Sir Winston Churchill's observation that "'sufferance is the badge' of all who have to deal with the Kremlin."³⁹

Under the circumstances, there was little that the American policy-makers could do except to watch and wait. The initiative was not in their hands. Publicly they made an effort to ignore the U.S.S.R. in foreign policy pronouncements, as they had done previously in the testimony offered during the lend-lease hearings. There was little if anything that could be said in defense of the Kremlin, but there was a continued desire, supported by accumulating evidence of a showdown in Eastern Europe, to avoid provocative comment. In the preparation of the President's "unlimited national emergency" speech of May 14, Robert Sherwood and Samuel Rosenman were instructed to avoid any mention of Japan or the U.S.S.R. In their first draft they did refer to the 1939 attack on Finland in listing acts of aggression, but this was deleted before the speech was delivered.⁴⁰ Secretary Hull, speaking earlier to the American Society of International Law on April 24, also confined his references to the victims of armed aggression to those that had fallen prey to Germany.⁴¹

The mounting demands of the American rearmament effort produced, however, a definite further restriction upon the volume of Soviet-American trade. There were reports in early May that certain items of industrial machinery, purchased and paid for by Soviet agents and awaiting export licensing, had been requisitioned by the U.S. under the defense program. In fact, it appeared likely that the 1937 commercial treaty between the two nations, renewed annually since that date, might not even be renewed in 1941.⁴² By that time, according to Secretary Hull, the Welles-Oumansky conversations "blew up in an explosive, acrimonious exchange between them." On May 14 the Ambassador came to see Hull, in a "dark mood." He gave the Secretary a written statement concerning the delay in the departure of a shipload of goods bound for the Soviet

37. Quoted in the *Washington Post*, April 20, 1941, p. 1.

38. Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 344.

39. *The Grand Alliance* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1950), p. 388.

40. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 297.

41. The speech is in the *Department of State Bulletin*, IV (1941), 491-94.

42. See the *New York Times*, May 7, 1941, p. 1; and May 10, 1941, p. 6.

Union, charging that the delay exemplified a "hostile attitude" on the part of the U.S. and warning that the U.S.S.R. would "draw all necessary conclusions" from that attitude. At that point Hull interrupted the Russian diplomat to make a heated denial of the charge. He then proceeded to deliver a spirited defense of the U.S. position with regard to exports, concluding with the assertion that the U.S. had always held friendly feelings toward the people of Russia.⁴³

These developments did not alter the fact that the controlling element in U.S. policy toward the U.S.S.R. was still the "Barbarossa" directive. Here was the pivot around which policy revolved. Consequently, both Washington and London were beset with a bewildering suspense throughout the spring. From a variety of sources, reports poured in dealing with the massive German troop movements to the east. Whether these were indicative of a final decision to march against Russia or whether they were designed to extort from Moscow new and more far-reaching agreements at the expense of the democracies was the great unknown.

Late in March the U.S. Embassy in Moscow was told by the Swedish Minister that the latter's colleague in Berlin had obtained quite definite information regarding German plans. According to this source, Germany would deliver an ultimatum to Russia in May and had three army groups poised for the attack if the demands were refused.⁴⁴ In mid-April, Ambassador Steinhardt reported Mr. Sakamoto of the Japanese Foreign Office as saying to an Axis diplomat while in Moscow that Germany was prepared to "destroy the Soviet Empire," the time being dependent upon the duration of the Balkan campaign.⁴⁵ From Vichy, Ambassador Leahy quoted a Foreign Office official as referring to the "certainty" of a German drive into the Ukraine in the very near future.⁴⁶ Minister Schoenfeld, in Helsinki, telegraphed that the Finnish Foreign Minister believed that a German-Russian war was likely. The Chargé d'Affaires in Berlin, Leland Morris, filed reports of a similar nature. On April 13 he cabled of "a revival and increase of belief here that Germany will shortly attack Russia," probably in May.⁴⁷

There were dispatches of another character, however, though they were less numerous. On April 16 Ambassador Steinhardt reported on the grimly humorous proceedings at the Moscow railroad terminal upon the occasion of Matsuoka's departure. He was satisfied that Stalin had made some remark to this effect: "Now that the Soviet Union and Japan have arranged their affairs, Japan will straighten out the East, the Soviet Union

43. Hull, *Memoirs*, II, 971-72.

45. *Ibid.*, IV, 952-53.

47. *Ibid.*, I, 19, 139.

44. *Foreign Relations*, 1941, I, 133-34.

46. *Ibid.*, IV, 953.

and Germany will take care of Europe and later on between them they will take care of the Americans."⁴⁸ The British Ambassador, for his part, held to the view throughout April and May that a new Russo-German agreement was more likely than a Russo-German war, though he admitted to some doubt as to whether Hitler could any longer be appeased.⁴⁹

In both Washington and London, the military authorities expressed a similar skepticism. U.S. Army Intelligence, throughout March and April, reiterated the opinion that the primary German offensive during the spring would be directed against the United Kingdom, with supporting operations against the British position in Egypt and the Middle East.⁵⁰ As late as May 24, the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, scouted the Soviet Union in these words: "Russia stands unique, a power in its own right but only because of its bulk. In its inherent inefficiency it is a menace to all and of value only to one—Germany—and that because of its raw materials."⁵¹

Throughout April and May, the British Joint Intelligence Committee was also inclined to doubt the likelihood of a Nazi drive against Russia. They believed that it was far more likely that a new agreement would be reached, with the Russians making the concessions necessary to avoid a test of strength with the *Wehrmacht*.⁵² Prime Minister Churchill reached a different conclusion.

POLICY DECISIONS IN LONDON

During the first three months of 1941, the Prime Minister believed that the signs pointed to the probability that, in his words, "Hitler and Stalin would make a bargain at our expense rather than a war upon each other." Late in March, however, he received reports of significant movements of German armor which appeared to him decisive evidence. Immediately following Yugoslavia's initial acquiescence to German demands on March 18, three Panzer divisions left Rumania for Cracow in Poland. After the revolution in Belgrade, the movement was reversed, and the Panzers returned to the south. The Prime Minister was singularly impressed.

To me [he wrote] it illuminated the whole Eastern scene like a lightning flash. The sudden movement to Cracow of so much armour needed in the

48. *Ibid.*, p. 954.

49. Estorick, *Stafford Cripps*, pp. 241-42.

50. See the Intelligence bulletins of March 28 and April 23, in *Pearl Harbor Hearings*, Pt. 21, pp. 4736, 4752.

51. This estimate was contained in a memorandum to the War Plans Division. Printed in *ibid.*, p. 4757.

52. Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, p. 355.

Balkan sphere could only mean Hitler's intention to invade Russia in May. This seemed to me henceforward certainly his major purpose. . . .⁵³

Churchill thereupon decided to take steps to warn Stalin. He sent to Ambassador Cripps a short message to be delivered personally to the Soviet dictator, in which he tersely informed him of the troop movement and concluded: "Your excellency will readily appreciate the significance of these facts." The message was sent on April 3, but on April 12 Sir Stafford replied that he had just sent a long letter to Vyshinsky urging that in the Balkans the U.S.S.R. had its last opportunity to resist Hitler in concert with others. The Ambassador advised against the delivery of so short a message, deeming that it would undo the force of his own communication. Foreign Minister Eden was sympathetic to the view, but the Prime Minister, greatly "vexed," advised compliance with the original instruction. As it turned out Cripps gave the message to Vyshinsky on April 19, receiving assurances that it would promptly be laid before Stalin.⁵⁴

The Soviet rulers did not reply to the warning from the British statesman. Throughout the ensuing weeks they held to their sullen aloofness from the Western powers as though fully persuaded that they could fend off catastrophe. After the Balkan campaign they hastened to make amends with Berlin by expelling the Yugoslav and Greek legations. Early in May, Stalin assumed the post of Premier. According to the Associated Press correspondent in Moscow, most of the diplomatic corps felt that this did not mean "'cabinet de guerre' but a cabinet of 'pacte a quatre,' meaning with Germany, Italy, and Japan."⁵⁵ So it was construed by the German Ambassador, Schulenberg. Ardently against an attack upon Russia, he assured Berlin that Stalin became Premier in order to maintain good relations with Germany.⁵⁶

Certainly, even as the day of reckoning approached amidst a multitude of storm signals, the Kremlin maintained a *sang-froid* that was as remarkable as it was exasperating. When, in April, Ambassador Steinhardt referred to the rumors of war in a conversation with the Secretary-General of the Narkomindel, he was blandly assured that a German attack would be sheer "madness."⁵⁷ On May 25 he was confidently informed by Vyshinsky that Soviet-German relations were "very friendly" and that the Kremlin foresaw no serious problems. If armed conflict did

53. *Ibid.*, p. 357.

54. *Ibid.*, pp. 357-60.

55. Henry C. Cassidy, *Moscow Dateline, 1941-1943* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1943), p. 15.

56. Sontag and Beddie (eds.), *Nazi-Soviet Relations*, pp. 335-36.

57. *Foreign Relations, 1941*, I, 135.

occur, Vyshinsky calmly informed the U.S. Ambassador that the Soviet Union could defend itself "alone and unaided," as it had done once before "against 12 countries."⁵⁸

The British Prime Minister, deeply convinced that such a war was a certainty, determined to press on, despite the response from Moscow. However much resentment he might have felt, and however trying the task, he continued to seek a more satisfactory relationship with the Soviet government. Early in June both he and Foreign Secretary Eden conferred with the Soviet Ambassador in London concerning German-Soviet relations. They assured Ambassador Maisky that if the war came, Britain would render such assistance to Russia as it could, that it would intensify its air attacks upon Germany and would dispatch a military mission to Moscow. The Soviet diplomat dourly replied that he would transmit this offer to Moscow. He curtly commented, however, that it would be more appreciatively considered if it were preceded by general negotiations to improve relations. When Eden said, "I suppose you mean questions concerning the Baltic States and related problems," Maisky answered "Yes."⁵⁹

Yet the British Prime Minister had already resolved on what he would do. To that resolution he held fast, and for it he sought American support. On June 15 he cabled to President Roosevelt:

From every source at my disposal, including some most trustworthy, it looks as if a vast German onslaught on Russia was imminent. . . . Should this new war break out, we shall, of course, give all encouragement and any help we can spare to the Russians, following the principle that Hitler is the foe we have to beat. I do not expect any class political reactions here, and trust a German-Russian conflict will not cause you any embarrassment.⁶⁰

At the same time, the Prime Minister sent word to the British Ambassador in Washington of his intent so that the matter might be taken up through normal diplomatic channels.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICY PROPOSALS

That Hitler was the foe to be beaten was a principle which would have evoked no dissent from the policy-makers in Washington. Still, the Department of State did not feel so urgently the press of events as did

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

⁵⁹ The U.S. Chargé d'Affaires in London was kept informed of these talks by Eden. Telegram, Johnson to Hull, June 13, 1941 (740.0011 EW1939/12030). See also Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, pp. 529-30; and Herbert Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin: The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 5-6.

⁶⁰ Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, p. 369.

London and was less inclined to suppress its resentment against the U.S.S.R. Goaded for months by the Russians' loud demands for export permits, incensed by the Russian "greed for territory," provoked by Soviet appeasement of Germany, most of the officials concerned were disposed to proceed much more warily toward the Kremlin than was the British Prime Minister.⁶¹

It was indeed difficult to overlook such performances as that staged by Radio Moscow on June 13. Referring to rumors of German economic and territorial demands upon the Soviet Union and to the rumors of an impending German invasion, Tass dismissed them as "nonsensical." Because of their persistence, however, Tass announced that it was authorized to state "that these rumors constitute clumsily concocted propaganda of forces hostile to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and to Germany and interested in further extension and unleashing of war." Such rumors, therefore, were "false and provocalional."⁶² If this was not a fulfillment of Steinhardt's advice that a U.S. warning to the Kremlin of German plans might become a subject for a Tass communique, it certainly approached the mark.

It is of interest to note that, in the midst of that fateful June, just as Hitler's *Wehrmacht* was poised for the blow that would give birth to the "grand alliance," Moscow and Washington engaged in two additional unpleasant diplomatic encounters. The first was definitely characteristic. This was a note from Secretary Hull to the Soviet Embassy on June 10 demanding the recall as *personae non gratae* the two Soviet Assistant Military Attachés for Air.⁶³ The two men were charged with unauthorized efforts to secure military information. When he was informed of this, Ambassador Steinhardt told the Secretary that under ordinary circumstances the Russians would certainly retaliate, but in view of the existing state of affairs they would probably forego this if the matter were given no publicity.⁶⁴ Oumansky delivered a heated protest, which was returned on June 17 as "unacceptable," but the Ambassador's prediction was borne out. Significantly, on July 14, the homeward bound attachés were given permission to return to Washington.⁶⁵

61. The comments of Herbert Feis on this score are particularly interesting. See his *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin*, pp. 6-7. Feis was at the time in the Department, serving as a special adviser on international economic affairs.

62. The text of the Tass statement is in Jones and Myers (eds.), *Documents on American Foreign Relations*, III, 349.

63. Hull to Oumansky, June 10, 1941 (701.6111/103).

64. Telegram, Steinhardt to Hull, June 11, 1941 (701.6111/1015).

65. Memorandum of conversation, Edward S. Page (Division of European Affairs) and D. S. Chuvakhin (First Secretary of the Soviet Embassy), June 17, 1941 (701.6111/1016); and memorandum of conversation, Loy Henderson and Oumansky, July 14, 1941 (701.6111/1039).

The second incident resulted from the executive order issued on June 14 freezing all assets in the U.S. belonging to Continental European states. The measure was not directed against the U.S.S.R., but it produced the usual claims of discriminatory treatment from the Soviet Ambassador.⁶⁶ So went the day-by-day conduct of relations with the Soviet Union.

It occasions no surprise that the Department of State was not in a generous frame of mind when it approached the problem of Soviet policy that June. It was, in fact, entertaining serious misgivings relative to the direction that the British government was taking in the conversations at London with Ambassador Maisky. On June 14 the department formulated a succinct statement of its principles governing policy toward the U.S.S.R. which was dispatched that day to the Embassy in London. It was repeated also to Ambassador Steinhardt in Moscow and to Ambassador Grew in Tokyo. As transmitted to Grew, the policy statement read:

For your strictly confidential information the Department has furnished the Embassy in London, in connection with the current reports of a possible Anglo-Russian *rapprochement* in the face of Russo-German tension, the following outline of this Government's present policy toward the Soviet Union:

- "1. To make no approaches to the Soviet Government;
2. To treat any approaches which the Soviet Government may make toward us with reserve until such time as the Soviet Government may satisfy us that it is not engaging merely in maneuvers for the purpose of obtaining unilateral concessions and advantages for itself;
3. To reject any Soviet suggestions that we make concessions for the sake of 'improving the atmosphere of American-Soviet relations' and to exact a strict *quid pro quo* for anything which we are willing to give the Soviet Union;
4. To make no sacrifices in principle in order to improve relations;
5. In general, to give the Soviet Government to understand that we consider an improvement in relations to be just as important to the Soviet Union as to the United States, if not more important to the Soviet Union;
6. To base our day-to-day relations so far as practicable on the principle of reciprocity."⁶⁷

This definition of policy brought from Steinhardt an emphatic endorsement. The Ambassador replied:

66. *Foreign Relations, 1941*, I, 763-64.

67. *Ibid.*, IV, 979. See also *ibid.*, I, 757-58; and Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 530. The repeated message to Grew is of further interest because of its date—June 21.

... As I have urged in my telegrams to the Department I have been convinced for quite some time that a firm policy such as outlined is best calculated to maintain our prestige in Moscow and to prepare the ground for the important developments with which we will ultimately be confronted. My observation of the psychology of the individuals who are conducting Soviet foreign policy has long since convinced me that they do not and cannot be induced to respond to the customary amenities, that it is not possible to create 'international good will' with them, that they will always sacrifice the future in favor of an immediate gain, and that they are not affected by ethical or moral considerations, nor guided by the relationships which are customary between individuals of culture and breeding. Their psychology recognizes only firmness, power, and force, and reflects primitive instincts and reactions entirely devoid of the restraints of civilizations. . . .[I am] of the opinion that they must be dealt with on this basis and this basis alone. . . .

I believe that the entire policy of the Soviet Union during recent months has centered on a desire to avoid an attack by Germany, and that while the Soviet Government has little liking for Britain, it has great respect for the United States. I am convinced, moreover, that if the policy which the Department has now laid down is strictly adhered to without deviation, the prestige of the United States will be enhanced, irrespective of the future course of American-Soviet relations.

I deem it of the utmost importance that our prestige here be enhanced inasmuch as it is in my opinion implicit in the ultimate solution of existing international relations that the Soviet Union will sooner or later turn to the United States in an endeavor to escape the consequences of having precipitated the European war and of its aggressive exploitation thereof.⁶⁸

On the day following the transmission of the policy directive to the Embassy in London, it will be recalled, Prime Minister Churchill had cabled to President Roosevelt his own policy decision respecting a German-Russian war—one quite at variance with the viewpoint of the Department of State. The Prime Minister had, at the same time, transmitted his decision to the British Ambassador in Washington. Lord Halifax thereupon called on Under-Secretary Welles to sound out the U.S. response in particular to the vital question of rendering aid to the Soviet Union.

The British Ambassador began this conversation of June 15 by remarking that his government deemed that "Barbarossa" was imminent. He then inquired if the U.S. would be willing to extend economic assistance to the Soviet Union if Germany did make the attack. The Under-Secretary replied in a quite skeptical vein. In the first place, said Welles, referring to his negotiations with Oumansky over the past ten months,

68. *Foreign Relations*. 1941, I, 764-66.

the obstacles to any significant increase in the volume of U.S.-Soviet trade were primarily practical ones. The U.S. was concentrating its efforts upon the rearmament and lend-lease programs, so "any economic assistance which might theoretically be made available to the Soviet Union could only be determined in the light of the urgent requirements of this Government" arising from those programs. It was, Welles continued, difficult to say what the U.S. could do under those circumstances. He went on to envisage the possibility that Japan might join in the war against the U.S.S.R. and close the Pacific ports. He agreed to look further into the matter but told the Ambassador that such factors as these would have to be taken into account.⁶⁹

Halifax then raised the subject of the cable of the preceding day setting forth U.S. policy toward the U.S.S.R. In the discussion of the political problems that followed, Welles took the occasion to say that he hoped the United Kingdom would not alter its policy on the issue of the Baltic states in order to facilitate any agreement with the Kremlin. To the "surprise" of the Under-Secretary, Halifax "said he felt he was rather cynical with regard to the Baltic States," whereupon Welles was moved to comment that he could see "no logical distinction" between those ill-gotten Soviet gains and Germany's conquests and further that he could see no advantages accruing to Britain by sanctioning this "loot."⁷⁰

The tenor of these remarks was not lost upon London. Several days later, Foreign Secretary Eden sought to offer some reassurances. He informed the Department of State that he had no intention of appeasing the Russians or of making unilateral concessions to them and that he was, in fact, in sympathy with the views expressed by Ambassador Steinhardt in his message of June 17.⁷¹

It is doubtful that the policy-planners in the State Department were impressed by these assurances from Whitehall. One thing is clear: these American officials wanted no part of any Anglo-Soviet military agreement paid for by political concessions to the Kremlin. It seemed essential, therefore, to refine further the basic U.S. policy position toward the U.S.S.R. with specific reference to the possibility of a German-Soviet war. The result was a memorandum submitted on June 21 to Under-Secretary Welles by the Chief of the Division of European Affairs, entitled "Policy with Regard to the Soviet Union in Case of the Outbreak of War Between the Soviet Union and Germany."⁷² Should such a war come, the

69. *Ibid.*, pp. 759-60.

70. *Ibid.*, pp. 760-61.

71. Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 531.

72. *Foreign Relations*, 1941, I, 766-67. I have also drawn on the study by George M. Fennimore, *The Role of the Department of State in Connection with the Lend-Lease Program* (Department of State, Division of Research and Publication, September, 1943), MS, pp. 150-51.

memorandum outlined this six-point program as a guide for U.S. decision during the early stages of the conflict:

"(1) We should offer the Soviet Union no suggestion or advice unless the Soviet Union approaches us.

"(2) In case the Department is asked by parties other than a representative of the Soviet Government if it intends to give aid to the Soviet Union in the event of a German-Soviet conflict, the reply should be that we have as yet not been approached by the Soviet Government on this subject.

"(3) If the Soviet Government should approach us directly requesting assistance, we should so far as possible, without interfering in our aid to Great Britain and to victims of aggression or without seriously affecting our own efforts of preparedness, permitting it even to have such military supplies as it might need badly and which we could afford to spare.

"(4) Such economic aid as we might give the Soviet Union in the form of materials should be extended direct on the basis of mutual advantage and not in cooperation with any third power.

"(5) We should steadfastly adhere to the line that the fact that the Soviet Union is fighting Germany does not mean that it is defending, struggling for, or adhering to, the principles in international relations which we are supporting.

"(6) We should make no promises in advance to the Soviet Union with regard to the assistance which we might render in case of a German-Soviet conflict, and we should make no commitment as to what our future policy towards the Soviet Union or Russia might be. In particular we should engage in no undertaking which might make it appear that we have not acted in good faith if later we should refuse to recognize a refugee Soviet Government or cease to recognize the Soviet Ambassador in Washington as the diplomatic representative of Russia in case the Soviet Union should be defeated and the Soviet Government should be obliged to leave the country."

Here was advice markedly at variance with the decision reached by Prime Minister Churchill—advice which, if it became U.S. policy, would have created a distinct cleavage in the emerging Anglo-American combination against the Axis. As Herbert Feis has remarked: "Thus, left to itself, the State Department, even after the German attack, would have done little more than relax restrictions on American exports for the Soviet Union."⁷³

73. Churchill, *Roosevelt, Stalin*, p. 7.

This June 21 memorandum reflects far more than the profound distrust of Soviet Russia and the bountiful harvest of resentment which Soviet policies had reaped—especially since the 1939 pact with Germany. It indicates also a persisting doubt of the permanency of the Soviet regime itself and of its military capabilities. Such doubt was widespread among American officials and to the very eve of “Barbarossa” convinced many of them that either the Soviet government would surrender to German demands without a fight, or, if given no last opportunity to appease Hitler’s wrath, would swiftly crumble under the lightning bolts of the German *Blitzkrieg*. The U.S. military establishment was especially prone to this viewpoint. Its skepticism was vividly reflected in the G-2 memorandum of May 24 which referred to the Soviet “inherent inefficiency” and depicted Russia as “a power in its own right . . . only because of its bulk.”⁷⁴ As late as June 17 Secretary of War Stimson remarked in his diary: “At present, from all the despatches, it seems nip and tuck whether Russia will fight or surrender. Of course, I think the chances are she will surrender.”⁷⁵

Nor did the Embassy in Moscow supply to the policy-planners at the State Department any grounds for confidence in Soviet capabilities. Ambassador Steinhardt was more firmly convinced than many of the military authorities that the Russians were prepared to resist rather than to capitulate to any German ultimatum. In an analysis of the state of Soviet-German relations which he cabled to the department on June 12, the Ambassador wrote:

. . . As I have previously informed the Department I am convinced that in order to avoid war at this time Stalin is prepared to make almost any concessions provided they do not impair the ability of the Soviet Union to defend itself. He might even make promises which would have the latter effect if carried out but I believe would fight now rather than agree to terms which would make it impossible to resist later. Just where he would draw the line of possible concessions it is difficult to say. . . .

. . . The most that I can assert with reasonable confidence is that no hostile initiative will be taken by Stalin who on the contrary is undoubtedly prepared to satisfy any reasonable German demands. . . .⁷⁶

But if the existence of the Soviet state were to be determined by its ability to defend itself against a German attack, Ambassador Steinhardt’s expectations closely coincided with those of the War Department. In a telegram dated June 7, in which he commented upon a lengthy analysis

74. See above p. 56.

75. Quoted in Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 528.

76. *Foreign Relations, 1941*, I, 755-57.

prepared by his staff on "Discontent Among the Soviet Peasantry and Its Effect on Soviet Foreign Policy," he observed that it was "highly probable that the Stalinist regime could not survive any invasion."⁷⁷

In the face of such estimates and expectations, the Division of European Affairs prepared the policy memorandum of June 21. Consequently, these officers were not only concerned to disassociate the U.S. from such concessions as the hard-pressed British might make to the Kremlin—as illustrated by paragraphs 4 and 5 of that document—but also to avoid making any commitments to the Soviet government which might complicate future relations with a new Russian regime. The roots of "containment" lie deep.

THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION

It is doubtful that the President ever saw the June 21 memorandum on Soviet policy, though he was certainly aware of the basic outlook of the Department of State officials. In any event, it appears that he had already reached a decision less discordant with that of the British Prime Minister.

Ambassador Winant had returned to Washington for a few days during that suspenseful June. Just before his departure, the President gave him oral instructions in reply to Churchill's message of June 15. That same week end Winant went to Chequers as the guest of the Prime Minister and there delivered the President's promise that he would give his prompt support to "any announcement that the Prime Minister might make welcoming Russia as an ally." This "important reassurance," as Churchill has termed it, was given verbally.⁷⁸

As the British statesman has recorded this exchange, it is noteworthy that the President did not make any specific statement regarding American assistance to the Russians. He merely promised to endorse "any announcement" made by Churchill. As to how much or how little in the way of material support the U.S. might afford to an Anglo-Soviet alliance—at least to the second of the members—only the future would tell. The President's reply did quite clearly indicate, however, that he was inclined to go some distance in this direction. Apparently Secretary Hull was also moving into the British camp.⁷⁹

Characteristically, the President did not express in writing his reasons for this step. As Langer and Gleason have remarked, he regarded support

77. Telegram, Steinhardt to Hull, June 7, 1941 (740.0011 EW1939/11809).

78. Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, p. 369.

79. See below, p. 116 for the advice given the President by Hull on June 22. It bore little resemblance to the State Department paper of June 21.

of Britain as the basic commitment of U.S. foreign policy and, aside from national and hemispheric defense, felt he should concur in Churchill's decisions whenever possible. He certainly did not conceive of the Soviet Union as any serious threat to American security, and his views of Russia were rather more tolerant than those of many of his subordinates.⁸⁰ Moreover, he had made no pledge to the U.S.S.R. His promise was given to Britain and was more indicative than explicit upon the questions of future policy.

At dawn on the morning of June 22 the German dictator unleashed his dogs of war. From the Baltic to the Black Sea, the Nazi-Soviet *entente* was abruptly ended during the early morning hours in the smoke and fire of the German cannonade. Hitler had prophesied: "When Barbarossa starts, the world will hold its breath."⁸¹ It did indeed, but that same night a familiar voice from London declared in unequivocal terms the British response to this German "crusade":

I have to declare [said Churchill] the decision of His Majesty's Government—and I feel sure it is a decision in which the great Dominions will in due course concur—for we must speak out now at once, without a day's delay. I have to make the declaration, but can you doubt what our policy will be? We have but one aim and one single irrevocable purpose. We are resolved to destroy Hitler and every vestige of his Nazi regime. From this nothing will turn us—nothing. . . . Any man or state who fights on against Nazidom will have our aid. Any man or state who marches with Hitler is our foe. . . . That is our policy and that is our declaration. It follows, therefore, that we shall give whatever help we can to Russia and the Russian people. We shall appeal to our friends and allies in every part of the world to take the same course and pursue it, as we shall faithfully and steadfastly to the end.⁸²

80. Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 531.

81. Quoted in Dallin, *German Rule in Russia*, p. 18.

82. Quoted in *The Grand Alliance*, pp. 372-73.

IV.

The Russian War and the American Public: The Climate of Opinion during June and July

AS THE NAZI AND SOVIET dictatorships clashed in battle along a thousand-mile front, questions of Soviet policy came temporarily to the forefront of the foreign policy issues facing the U.S. Out of the recesses of indifference, if not disdain, to which they had been consigned, the fortunes and destiny of the Soviet Republic moved to the very center of American consciousness.

The American political scene was already tense and storm-ridden when the Nazi legions confidently marched forth to subdue the Russian giant. It was true that American sympathies had run strongly against Germany, that American policies had been directed toward underwriting the war effort of Germany's enemies, for many months before that historic June morning. Those policy decisions had not been reached, however, amidst a placid setting of concord and unanimity. The entrance of Soviet Russia to the center of the international arena injected new and explosive questions into a raging debate. The events of August, 1939, to June, 1941, superimposed upon a legacy of animosity that extended back to 1917, had not disposed the American people to look kindly upon "Red Russia."

INTERVENTIONISTS AND ISOLATIONISTS

The lines of battle in this historic foreign policy debate in the U.S. had been firmly drawn long before Hitler marched against the Soviet Union. Basically, there were two great warring camps among the American people, daily waging battle over the course America should pursue toward the great catastrophe that had engulfed mankind: the interventionists and the isolationists.¹ Within each camp there were frictions, di-

1. The literature here is legion. I have found particularly valuable the discussions in Robert E. Osgood, *Ideals and Self-Interest in America's Foreign Relations: The Great Transformation of the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), especially Chapters XV and XVI.

visions, and factions, but there was also a rather fundamental agreement which permits of generalization.

The interventionist saw American interests and American ideals as contingent upon the defeat of Nazi Germany and its allies. Consequently, the interventionist endorsed policy proposals calculated to thrust American power, in some manner, into the scales against the Axis. The limits of intervention were disputed. Some, like the members of the Fight for Freedom Committee, were persuaded that American belligerency was essential if the defeat of Germany were to be insured. More common was the objective expressed in the title of the largest and most renowned of the interventionist organizations—the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies. All could agree that American interests demanded the provision of aid and support—materially and morally—for Great Britain but not upon how far beyond that America should go.²

As to ideals, the interventionist was prone to speak of the war against Germany as a war for the preservation of Christian civilization and democracy. In the utterances of the President—in such phrases as the “arsenal of democracy” and the “four freedoms”—this system of ideals found its most cogent expression.

The isolationist—or noninterventionist, as he often preferred to call himself—denied the necessity of American involvement in the international struggle. He was prone rather to depict it as another of Europe’s endless wars, one more manifestation of the ancient rivalries of the Old World. With all that, America was unconcerned. Its posture should be defensive, and, if armed and ready, it could meet any future contingency. But it must not go forth from its invulnerable natural fortress to engage in quarrels which were not of its own making and which did not impinge upon its security. To the isolationist, the memory of “the war to end war” was unanswerable testimony to the wisdom of his viewpoint and to the futility of interventionism.³

The isolationist also had his ideals and his sense of mission—sometimes grandiose in scale but more likely to be strongly nationalistic and occasionally almost xenophobic. He argued that America could best serve the cause of civilization by remaining aloof from the war. Only in that manner could it demonstrate by example the efficacy of the ways of peace and be prepared, at the proper time, effectively to exert its power

2. On the Committee to Defend America and the interventionist program generally, see Walter Johnson, *The Battle Against Isolation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944).

3. A concise brief for the isolationist case, stated with force and clarity, is the statement made by Professor Charles A. Beard before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on February 4, 1941. See Senate, *Lend-Lease Hearings*, Pt. 2, pp. 307ff.

in the cause of world peace. And like the interventionists, he had his great national organizations to wage battle daily in behalf of these policies and these ideals. The most important of these, and the most representative, was America First.⁴

These then were the two great rival camps, each spearheaded by organizations which were foreign policy pressure groups *par excellence*. As the war engulfed Russia that summer of 1941, each saw a vindication of its position and a confirmation of its fears. It is as Carl Becker once wrote: "Whether arguments command assent or not depends less upon the logic that conveys them than upon the climate of opinion in which they are sustained."⁵

THE INTERVENTIONIST REACTION

Defining the Issues

To the champions of the Allied cause among the American public, there were two great dangers immediately perceived in the Nazi-Soviet war. The first danger was domestic in nature. It concerned the way in which the American people might react to this war between two totalitarian powers—a war, in William C. Bullitt's phrase, between "Satan and Lucifer."⁶ The interventionists were alarmed that this might lead to a relaxation in the effort against Germany, that the nature of the two antagonists might produce a mood of withdrawal that could be disastrous.

This, in turn, was joined to a fear of the consequences of a German victory in the Soviet Union. Like Prime Minister Churchill, the interventionists saw in "Barbarossa" a mighty prelude to a grand assault on the West. Each day that the Russians held on was priceless time for the Western powers to prepare for that coming ordeal. The interventionists perforce viewed the new war with a profound sense of urgency. The *New York Times*, two days after the German armies had begun their march to the east, effectively stated the case:

Let there be no mistake about it, a quick and complete German victory in Russia would be a catastrophe of the first importance for England and America. It would enable Hitler to defy the British blockade, to secure petroleum and food supplies for years, to create a vassal regime in Russia, to seize India and

4. The history of America First and of the isolationist crusade in 1940-41 is told in Wayne S. Cole, *America First: The Battle Against Intervention, 1940-1941* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1953).

5. *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932), p. 5.

6. Bullitt used these designations in a speech at the University of Montreal. *New York Times*, July 15, 1941, p. 13.

the oil fields of the Near East, to make a temporary alliance with Japan for the seizure of China and to threaten the United States from both oceans.⁷

Even more concrete were the fears expressed by such commentators as Walter Lippmann as to the fate of Siberia in the event of a German victory and as to the impact upon Japan of this absorption of Soviet energies.⁸ It was, as Hitler had foretold, a time of suspense—a time of grave anxieties.

To meet these two dangers, the interventionists acted promptly to impress upon the general public and the policy-makers in Washington the primacy of the German threat to American security and to emphasize that the character of the Soviet regime did not alter this fundamental fact. They counseled, accordingly, that the American people appraise the Russian war in "realistic" terms.

The Committee to Defend America urged upon the nation the need for "clear-headed realism," warning that Soviet ideology must not be permitted to obstruct efforts to meet the peril faced in Nazi Germany.⁹ The *Washington Post* insisted that "our first job is the extirpation of Hitler,"¹⁰ and columnist Mark Sullivan believed that to hold in mind that basic assumption would "give us a guide for whatever action we take."¹¹ At a "Stop Hitler First" rally in New York on July 2, sponsored by the Union for Democratic Action, such speakers as Reinhold Niebuhr and Herbert Agar advocated support for the Russian cause on "purely strategic grounds."¹² Walter Lippmann wrote that, in facing the new war, Americans had to react as "adult men," not as "children" quarreling over ideologies.¹³ Barnet Nover advised his readers in the *Washington Post* to keep in mind that "foreign policy is not an exercise in magnanimity. It is or should be an exercise of the national will designed to further the national interest."¹⁴

Most interventionist spokesmen did not attempt to gloss over the record of the Soviet government or their own emotions in that regard. They used these things to make more forceful their call for realism. The *Richmond Times-Dispatch* admonished its readers not to "allow our natural detestation of Stalin and his sanguinary dictatorship to blind us

7. June 26, 1941, p. 18.

8. *Washington Post*, June 24, 1941, p. 9, and June 26, p. 11.

9. Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, "Washington Office Information Letter," June 27, 1941 (No. 24).

10. June 24, 1941, p. 8.

11. *Washington Post*, June 23, 1941, p. 9.

12. *New York Times*, July 3, 1941, p. 4.

13. *Washington Post*, June 28, 1941, p. 11.

14. June 25, 1941, p. 7.

to the fact that Nazism is the eternal enemy which must be defeated."¹⁵ The *Christian Science Monitor* took the Soviet system severely to task but went on to declare: "Whatever the antipathy of capitalism for Marxism, whatever the dislike of free men for Stalin's despotism, whatever our recognition that communism is a dangerous philosophy—the immediate attack comes from Nazism."¹⁶ And with striking candor, the *New York Herald-Tribune* put the issue in these terms: "The criminal subversions of Communism, the past sinuosities of Soviet policy and the politico-economic doctrines of the Stalinist state are as irrelevant to the West at this great juncture as they were to Herr Hitler himself when the latter struck his bargain in August, 1939. . . ."¹⁷

Opposed to the sense of urgency with which the interventionists viewed the Russian war, there was the isolationist thesis that, in a conflict of such a nature, the only sensible course was to permit the two antagonists to destroy one another. Acceptance of such reasoning would have produced precisely the sort of public mood of indifference which the interventionists feared.

In addition to depicting terrible consequences that would follow in the wake of a German victory, the interventionists moved to counter this proposition. Any notion that Germany and Russia would exhaust one another was branded by Walter Lippmann as "wishful thinking of the most reckless sort"—as a dangerous "gambler's hope."¹⁸ The *Des Moines Register* warned that such ideas could only cause the country to become "befuddled and divided,"¹⁹ and the *New York Times* dismissed the thought as "fatuous."²⁰ To the *Louisville Courier-Journal* even to assume that the Russians could hold out for long would be "mad and ruinous optimism."²¹

The interventionists warned that to accept the proposition that the two dictators should be left to fight it out was to play Hitler's game. It would lead, warned the *New York Herald-Tribune*, to precisely the paralysis of will that Hitler had expected in casting himself in the role of a "crusader" against bolshevism. The German was counting upon creating a "fake dilemma" for the West by capitalizing upon the animosity that existed toward Russia.²² The fact was, the interventionists insisted, that the attack on Russia was the final proof of the futility of trying to live in peace with the Third Reich. The *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* saw it as definite confirmation that Hitler's ambitions were

15. June 23, 1941, p. 8.

17. June 23, 1941, p. 14.

18. *Washington Post*, June 28, 1941, p. 11.

19. June 23, 1941, p. 6.

21. June 24, 1941, p. 6.

16. June 24, 1941, p. 18.

20. June 24, 1941, p. 18.

22. July 10, 1941, p. 18.

without limit and asked how Colonel Lindbergh could seriously argue that a negotiated settlement could be reached with such a man.²³ The *New York Times* was mightily impressed by the fact that the Nazi Fuehrer had turned not upon an enemy, or even a neutral, but upon a collaborator. It commended this fact to the attention of America First and to the statesmen in Rome, Vichy, and Tokyo.²⁴

There remained, of course, the salient fact of ideological antipathy between the U.S. and the Soviet Union and the fact that at least since 1939 Moscow had been regarded as in the enemy camp. In general, the interventionists did not pass over this in silence during those anxious weeks. The *Louisville Courier-Journal*, ardent advocate of an American declaration of war against Germany, admitted that "the two great tyrannical enemies of mankind are at each other's throats."²⁵ The *Richmond Times-Dispatch* spoke of it as a war between "the two most dangerous international brigands of modern times."²⁶ The *Dallas Morning News*²⁷ and the *Charlotte Observer*²⁸ were among the numerous organs which commented that there was no "real" difference between the character of the Nazi and Soviet dictatorships. The *New York Times* refused to "pretend that we have anything in common with the brutal despotism of Stalin."²⁹ In this frame of mind, how could the interventionists counsel a course of action designed to aid—directly or indirectly—the cause of the Soviet Union? How could they counter the isolationist accusation that, barring mutual destruction of both, the choice before the nation was a victorious nazism or a triumphant communism?

Fundamentally, it seems, the proponents of the interventionist outlook were able to deny that any such baleful choice existed because they did not regard Soviet power as a threat to the Western democracies. Or, to put the matter more bluntly, they grossly underestimated, for the most part, the political and military capabilities of the Soviet state. It seems fair to say that this erroneous assessment of Soviet strength, while sincerely and honestly made, dissolved a multitude of perplexities that might otherwise have inhibited many champions of the interventionist viewpoint. For, not fearing Soviet power, however much they might distrust Soviet intentions, the interventionists could put forth in confidence the thesis that American interests were vitally affected by the duration and efficacy of Soviet resistance. Two aspects of this interventionist interpretation of events must be discussed if the policy recommendations that

23. June 23, 1941, p. 1.

25. June 24, 1941, p. 6.

27. June 25, 1941, Sec. II, p. 2.

29. June 24, 1941, p. 18.

24. June 29, 1941, Sec. IV, p. 8.

26. June 23, 1941, p. 8.

28. June 24, 1941, p. 8.

this segment of the public put forward are to be seen in proper perspective.

There was a rather pervading expectation among the interventionists that the Soviet Union was doomed. Illustrative of this was the rather authoritative report on military opinion made by Ernest K. Lindley shortly after the war had come to Russia. He commented that, "were [the] antagonists more evenly matched, [the war] could be viewed with no little equanimity by the western democracies." As it was, military experts believed that the only question "was how much in time, men and materials the Russians can compel the German army to expend."³⁰ The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* was willing to concede that Soviet military strength was something of an "enigma"³¹ and the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* that Hitler might have "miscalculated."³² Some liberal organs of opinion would even go further. Edgar Snow expressed the hope in the *New Republic*³³ that the German army might meet in Russia the fate the Japanese had met in China. But more characteristic was the remark of *Fortune* magazine. It was "barely possible," it said, that Hitler might meet the fate of Napoleon, but "all signs point to Russian and German forces meeting in decisive head-on conflict, with Hitler the victor."³⁴

There was, consequently, a disposition to regard the Soviet dictatorship as finished. The Philadelphia *Evening Bulletin* observed that "war has a way of toppling tyrannies,"³⁵ the *Washington Post* that "Stalin's goose is cooked."³⁶ Conservatives were particularly prone to this view. Eugene Lyons published an article entitled "The End of Joseph Stalin,"³⁷ while William Henry Chamberlin wrote in *The Atlantic* that "from June 22, 1941, Stalinite Communism has been pretty definitely eliminated as Europe's wave of the future."³⁸

To the extent that this frame of mind prevailed, the interventionists could hardly see any such malefic choice before the nation as one of Soviet or Nazi domination of Europe. "No matter what happens," declared the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, "there will not be a 'Triumphant Communism.' The magic has gone out of Communism. The world knows that it does not make men free. The world knows it is not an efficient system of production."³⁹ Even if the Russians fought on in-

30. *Washington Post*, June 25, 1941, p. 7.

31. June 23, 1941, Sec. III, p. 2.

32. June 23, 1941, p. 8.

33. "Guerrilla Tactics in Soviet Defense," *New Republic*, CV (July 7, 1941), 79-80.

34. "Hitler Turns on Stalin," *Fortune*, XXIV (July, 1941), Special Supplement.

35. June 25, 1941, p. 12.

36. July 4, 1941, p. 6.

37. *The American Mercury*, LIII (August, 1941), 135-42.

38. "The Struggle for Continents," *The Atlantic*, CLXVIII (September, 1941), 274-80.

39. June 28, 1941, p. 6.

definitely, most interventionists shared the confident expectation of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* that in a Europe liberated from Nazi suzerainty Britain and America would easily be the dominant powers.⁴⁰ In any event, as long as Germany was defeated the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* foresaw that the two English-speaking nations would exercise the "decisive voice" at the peace table,⁴¹ and the *Dallas Morning News* remarked that there was no doubt that "an awakened democracy will now take steps after Hitler is beaten to make sure that the Russian brand of political communism stays home."⁴²

As the Russian armies demonstrated unexpected prowess they received the congratulations of American interventionists, but during July there was little expectation that the Russians could do anything more than maintain a front of some description, perhaps along the Urals. After two weeks of the war there were some admissions that the Germans were not doing so well as anticipated,⁴³ but it was still seen as largely a "matter of time" until all of European Russia lay under the German flag.⁴⁴ Late in July the *Washington Post* remarked that Russian resistance had "surprised the world" but that there was no ground for assuming it could continue indefinitely to absorb German energies.⁴⁵

Most interventionists were thus prepared to deny in categorical terms that Soviet communism posed a menace to the U.S. In sounding the call for realism, the Committee to Defend America asserted: "Despite our abhorrence of Communism, we must realize that Russia does not endanger the security of the Americas." It spoke of Russia as a "backward" state which over a period of twenty years had "failed to manifest effective expansive power."⁴⁶ In the face of this, the committee contended that isolationists' "objections being made on ideological grounds against aiding Russia have little to do with political realities."⁴⁷

Dr. James B. Conant, President of Harvard University, further developed this line of thought in an address to the National Education Association in Boston on June 30. In discussing what the national attitude should be toward the Nazi-Soviet war, he stated that communism had never been the danger to the U.S. that nazism had been since the fall of France. "This is simply because," he continued, "the Communist ideology has never been combined with a military force which could

40. June 25, 1941, p. 10.

41. June 24, 1941, Sec. II, p. 2.

42. June 25, 1941, Sec. II, p. 2.

43. John G. Norris, *Washington Post*, July 9, 1941, p. 2.

44. Ernest Lindley, *Washington Post*, July 6, 1941, p. 6.

45. July 22, 1941, p. 8.

46. "Washington Office Information Letter," June 27, 1941 (No. 24).

47. *Ibid.*, July 4, 1941 (No. 25).

threaten this hemisphere. It seems inconceivable that the present Russian forces could directly menace this country."⁴⁸

In late July, Wendell Willkie more forcefully stated the case to a mammoth America United rally in San Francisco. The Republican leader asserted that the only thing Americans had to fear from communism was "the possible triumph of an ideology"—an ideology whose appeal he believed was "rapidly dying." For twenty-three years, he told the crowd, the Soviet Union had been the neighbor of the U.S. across the Bering Straits, but never in that time had it been a threat to national security. But Hitler was "different," and the difference was all important. Beyond peradventure, said Willkie, the German dictator was bent on world dominion through military conquest and for that menacing purpose had shaped one of the finest armies in history.⁴⁹

Essentially the interventionists saw in the Russo-German war a vindication of their fears and hopes. It fortified more strongly their conviction that Hitler was the compelling threat and their determination to take countervailing action. In prescribing courses of action for the U.S. to pursue at that critical juncture, they were strongly influenced by the nature of the latest recruit in the anti-Nazi front.

Policy Recommendations

Suspicious of the Soviet government and skeptical of its capabilities, the immediate reaction of the interventionists was, as has been noted, to regard the new war as chiefly significant in giving the democracies time to prepare for the German offensive against the West. In their initial recommendations as to policy decisions, the interventionists were chiefly concerned with steps which would best utilize this "precious respite," as Stimson called it.

The most widely held interventionist belief as to the proper course of action to take was that of redoubling the effort to assist Britain, while pushing forward at maximum speed the American rearmament program. Lewis Douglas, chairman of the national policy board of the Committee to Defend America, immediately declared that the new war made "unmistakably clear the necessity of decisive action with Great Britain in our common defense in the war Germany is waging upon all mankind."⁵⁰ There was little disposition to discuss direct American assistance to the U.S.S.R. The comment of the *Durham Morning Herald* was quite typical

48. William A. Macdonald, *New York Times*, July 1, 1941, p. 4. The text of Conant's address is in National Education Association of the United States, *Proceedings of the Seventy-Ninth Annual Meeting* (Washington: NEA, 1941), pp. 37-44.

49. *New York Times*, July 25, 1941, p. 9.

50. *New York Times*, June 23, 1941, p. 9.

when it pointed out that American arms production was insufficient to meet the supply commitments already made to Britain and China.⁵¹ The best aid for Russia was to "redouble" the effort to get everything possible to the British. The Committee to Defend America saw this as the "only effective way" to prolong Soviet resistance, for American aid on a large scale would enable the British to step up their bombing offensive against Germany.⁵² In this manner the democracies could seize a "golden opportunity" to strike at the vitals of German war-making power in the West, while German strength was pinned down in Russia. In strident tones, interventionists called for immediate action along these lines. Time and again the theme was reiterated during June and early July on the editorial pages of such newspapers as the *New York Times*, the *New York Herald-Tribune*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, the *Omaha Evening World Herald*, and in the columns of Walter Lippmann, Dorothy Thompson, Frank Kent, and Mark Sullivan. The Fight for Freedom Committee made an urgent appeal for such an effort; the national commander of the American Legion in a nation-wide radio address called upon his fellow-countrymen to recognize the "necessity for getting our goods delivered in volume to Great Britain."⁵³

The more outspoken champions of the interventionist case were prepared to take the next logical step. The war in Russia, many of them declared, made it essential for the U.S. to insure the delivery of all possible war supplies to Britain. They called for the use of American naval and air forces in the Atlantic, in concert with British forces, to clear the seas of German submarines and to convoy American supplies to the British Isles.⁵⁴ Endorsing an editorial to this effect by Ralph Ingersoll in *PM*, the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* angrily commented on July 3 that in postponing such a step the President was "frittering away the golden chance."

All this is not to say that the interventionists did not discuss the question of whether the U.S. should supply direct assistance to the Soviet Union. The discussion of this question afforded a striking illustration that Russia's adherence to the cause was a development that caused some serious embarrassment. Though imbued with a sense of urgency, the interventionists seemed to have felt that the new conflict placed them quite on the defensive in countering the isolationist response to the war.

51. June 25, 1941, p. 4.

52. "Washington Office Information Letter," July 4, 1941 (No. 25).

53. *New York Times*, July 5, 1941, p. 9.

54. The Committee to Defend America, Fight for Freedom, and such newspapers as the *Courier-Journal*, the *Herald-Tribune*, and the *New York Times* were illustrative of this.

There was, first of all, a disposition on the part of many to dismiss the question of direct aid to the Soviets as a "hypothetical" or purely "academic" one. Initially this was a candid appraisal of the realities. American arms stores were inadequate as it was, transport problems appeared to present insuperable obstacles, and, in view of the prevailing estimates of the duration of the Russian war, common sense would dictate that any available supplies should go to Britain.⁵⁵ But in a press conference on June 24 the President saw fit to announce his willingness to supply such materials as could be spared to the Soviet forces,⁵⁶ perhaps in order to send up a trial balloon. The reaction to his remarks in many interventionist quarters was a commentary on the defensive posture many of them had felt it necessary to take. Perhaps, also, it was a commentary on the bitterness with which many regarded the Soviet government.

The *New York Times* insisted that there was no occasion to raise the issue of whether the U.S. should "help Russia." The only issue was to "stop Hitler." It argued that the only way to meet that issue was to give every possible support to Britain and that the wisdom of concentrating on this—rather than aid for Russia—was dictated by four considerations: "time," Soviet "incompetence," "strategy," and American "unity." Concerning the last of these, the *Times* warned that raising the issue of aiding Russia would lead to "a discussion of issues which are irrelevant to the all-important central question of seizing this chance to deal Hitler a deadly blow."⁵⁷

The *Washington Post*, following the President's remarks, had this comment to make: "Any such aid would be bound to make for mental confusion among the American people. It would not be easy to persuade them that aid to the Soviet Union is in precisely the same category of self-helpfulness as aid to Britain."⁵⁸

Milo J. Warner, national commander of the American Legion, canvassed the opinions of the Legion's national executive committee and made this statement:

A gist of the advice that I received in response to my inquiry of our national executive committeemen may be summed up in a sentence. In no way changing our attitude toward communism, the invasion of Russia by

55. See the editorials in the *Durham Morning Herald*, the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, and the *Washington Post*, during late June.

56. The President remarked that "of course" Russia would receive American aid, if it were asked for, though he then went on to put stress upon the fact of British priority and other practical obstacles. This press conference is discussed more fully in the following chapter.

57. June 26, 1941, p. 22.

58. June 28, 1941, p. 6.

Germany forms an occasion for the United States to increase and speed up her aid to Great Britain.

* * * * *

We should not worry now about aid to Russia pro or con. We have no more of the essentials of war needs to spare than Britain can use as fast as we can get them to her. We can use every available ship to get goods to Britain. We can produce arms and munitions no faster than Britain can usefully employ them. When we can produce more than that we can take time to consider if there is better use for them than in the hands of our own forces.⁵⁹

Few spokesmen had anything to say about lend-lease for the U.S.S.R. and, when suggested, it was generally accompanied with conditions. The *New York Herald-Tribune*, concerned over the Far Eastern repercussions of the war, suggested that "with intelligent diplomacy and realistic use of the lease-lend powers" the President might make of Vladivostok a "potential" U.S. base and thereby give pause to the extremists in Tokyo.⁶⁰ Louis Fischer suggested that before any consideration of Soviet aid under lend-lease, "Washington should informally demand that Russia and Britain sign an agreement not to conclude a separate peace with Germany."⁶¹ The New Orleans *Times-Picayune* counseled that the determination of Moscow to fight Hitler be first measured and that Communist activity in the U.S. be observed, before any thought was given to lend-lease.⁶² The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* deemed it "premature" even to consider such aid, since Soviet arms stores were probably larger than those of the U.S. in any event.⁶³ There were few seconds to the motion of the *Charlotte Observer* that "all possible aid" be sent direct to the Soviet Union.⁶⁴

Rather, there was a distinct expression of apprehension that in suggesting aid to Russia, the President might have confused the public, confronted it with a needless dilemma, and actually have endangered the pivotal program of lend-lease assistance to Britain.

Walter Lippmann thought that the raising of the issue by the President was an indication that the Nazi-Soviet war had caught the White House and the State Department "unprepared" and that as a result they were "compelled to improvise." Accordingly, he charged that the President had put the American interest in the Russian war in a "false perspective." Since the U.S. had no means to send aid, and no aid to send,

59. *New York Times*, July 5, 1941, p. 9.

60. June 24, 1941, p. 20.

61. "Hitler Marches East," *The Nation*, CLII (June 28, 1941), 743-44.

62. June 24, 1941, p. 8.

63. June 23, 1941, Sec. II, p. 2.

64. June 24, 1941, p. 8.

he pronounced it "misleading and confusing to talk as if we could decide, and therefore had to decide, whether we wanted to help Stalin. When nothing can be done practically about a question, what point is there in precipitating an emotionalized debate about it?"⁶⁵

Even more pointed were the comments of Mark Sullivan. He feared that talk of helping Russia might "imperil our future help to Britain" and might make "Congress and the country hesitant to go on." The President's comments, he said, were "thoughtless" and should be withdrawn.⁶⁶ Frank Kent wrote in his syndicated column that the President's statement had "fallen flat," that it had only aroused "justifiable American anger." To try to help Russia through any other means than rushing supplies to Britain under U.S. naval escort was "folly."⁶⁷ The *Washington Post* complained in mid-July of a "strange official anxiety to discover a sort of community with the Soviet Union."⁶⁸

There were, also, some interventionists who were disposed to solve the problem by abdicating the power of decision to Great Britain. The *Richmond Times-Dispatch* editorialized that "if Britain wishes to pass along to Russia any equipment we ship to her, and which she thinks can be most advantageously employed in such a fashion, that will be her affair."⁶⁹ When, late in July, it seemed quite clear that Russia could buy war supplies in the U.S. but would not be receiving any under lend-lease, the *Times-Dispatch* thought it a "reasonable compromise." Like many of its contemporaries, it feared that there would be a "tremendous outcry" against the "giving of arms, munitions and materials to a country which is ruled by such a bloodthirsty tyrant as Stalin."⁷⁰

It seems fair to say that during the first weeks of the war the interventionist spokesmen saw no advantage in discussing aid to Russia and particularly the application of lend-lease. It no doubt was rather "theoretical," but it also reflected the ideological and moral dilemmas which "Barbarossa" had brought to America.

THE ISOLATIONIST REACTION

Defining the Issues

The isolationists received the news of the German invasion of the Soviet Union with something approaching jubilation. They immediately interpreted it as an event that would redound to the advantage of their

65. *Washington Post*, June 26, 1941, p. 11.

66. *Ibid.*, June 27, 1941, p. 11.

67. *Wall Street Journal*, July 3, 1941, p. 4.

68. July 11, 1941, p. 8.

70. July 29, 1941, p. 10.

69. June 23, 1941, p. 8.

cause and went forth to debate the issues with renewed hope and confidence. On June 23 the executive committee of America First issued a statement which succinctly stated the leading points in the isolationist response to the new conflict.

The entry of Communist Russia into the war [it asserted] should settle once and for all the intervention issue here at home. The war party can hardly ask the people of America to take up arms behind the red flag of Stalin. With the ruthless forces of dictatorship and aggression now clearly aligned on both sides, the proper course for the United States becomes even clearer. We must continue to build our own defenses and take no part in this incongruous European conflict. . . . In the name of the four freedoms are we now to undertake a program of all-out aid to Russia?⁷¹

In vivid contrast to the interventionist plea that American vital interests were at stake, the isolationists were convinced that the new conflict was most assuredly one from which America could remain aloof. They cited the war as another instance of two "thieves falling out" and denied that the U.S. could take sides in such a conflict. Said the *Wall Street Journal*: "The American people know that the principal difference between Mr. Hitler and Mr. Stalin is the size of their respective mustaches. An alliance with either would be at the price of national self-respect."⁷²

Far from providing the nation with an urgent cause for action, many isolationists believed that the war afforded cause for relaxation. The *Chicago Tribune* printed an editorial entitled "The Heat Is Off." It insisted that the danger of an invasion of Britain had subsided for at least the remainder of the year. "The excuse for haste," it declared, "is gone."⁷³

There was widespread agreement among the isolationists that the proper outlook upon a war between two such despicable opponents was to hope for their mutual exhaustion and destruction. Certainly it proved, in their minds, that there was absolutely no ground for American involvement in the European war.

In a statement to the press on June 22, Herbert Hoover put it this way: "It is one-half a dozen more reasons for the United States to stay out of the European war. . . ."⁷⁴ And in a national radio address on June 29 he said that it made a "gargantuan jest" of the argument that America should intervene.⁷⁵ Senator Burton K. Wheeler told an Ameri-

71. Quoted in Cole, *America First*, p. 85. He also summarizes, at pp. 85-88, the statements of specific America First spokesmen.

72. June 25, 1941, p. 4.

73. June 23, 1941, p. 10.

74. *New York Times*, June 23, 1941, p. 9.

75. *Ibid.*, June 30, 1941, p. 1.

ca First rally at Hartford, Connecticut, that the war was "the death struggle between the armed might of Nazism and Communism . . . and not an American war." John T. Flynn, of America First, cited it as proof that it "is less our war now than ever."⁷⁶

In the new conflict the isolationists saw definite confirmation of their contention that the war was a manifestation of power politics, not a war for democracy. The Reverend Dr. John A. O'Brien, of the University of Notre Dame, told an America First meeting in Brooklyn on June 24 that Britain's welcoming of Soviet Russia as an ally was the *coup de grace* to the fiction that the war was one for the preservation of Christianity and civilization.⁷⁷ It was proof, echoed the *Chicago Tribune*, that it was merely another "war for empire."⁷⁸ The New York *Commercial and Financial Chronicle* was confident that the talk of the four freedoms, of the preservation of human liberty against the onslaughts of dictatorship, would have to go by the board. The interventionists, it opined, could "hardly fail to find it embarrassing to be allied" with a regime which "among the governments now ruling was the pioneer in the utter destruction of liberty."⁷⁹

At the root of these denials of American interest in the Russian war were the fears expressed by isolationists that there was nothing to choose—that a German victory or a Soviet victory were equally heinous outcomes or that, as some saw it, a Soviet victory would be the greater evil by all odds. Rather than dwell upon the consequences of a German victory, the isolationists were more prone to pass over in silence the likelihood of Soviet defeat, while painting lurid portraits of the aftermath of a Soviet victory. Hence the argument of many that the only desirable outcome would be a stalemate.

The *Chicago Tribune* said that the nation's "greatest hope" was that Hitler and Stalin would destroy one another—that a Stalin victory would "be a substitution of one terror for another" to bestride Europe.⁸⁰ The Washington *Times-Herald* insisted that the fact of the matter was that "Russia is more of a despotism than Germany." It conceded that it was "nicer to have Russia on our side than it would be to have Russia on Hitler's side," but it warned:

. . . If Stalin wins the structure of Hitler-controlled Europe will crack up, and there will be nothing left to keep communism dammed back in Russia. . . .

⁷⁶ Quoted in "Aid-for-Russia Issue Flares to Complicate Foreign Policy," *Newsweek*, XVIII (July 7, 1941), 12.

⁷⁷ *New York Times*, June 25, 1941, p. 6.

⁷⁸ June 24, 1941, p. 12.

⁷⁹ June 28, 1941, p. 4013.

⁸⁰ June 25, 1941, p. 10; June 26, 1941, p. 10.

The repercussions in this country of a Europe-wide engulfment by communism would be enormous. It might mean the end of democracy all over the world. We'd better take notice of these possibilities before we rush to the aid of Stalin.⁸¹

It was significant that the editorial did not enlarge upon the repercussions of a German conquest of the U.S.S.R.

Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh, perhaps the most popular of the America First orators, reflected the fact that, to many isolationists, Soviet Russia and communism were more deadly perils than Germany ever could be conceived to be. He told an America First rally in San Francisco on July 1: "I would a hundred times rather see my country ally herself with England, or even Germany with all her faults, than with the cruelty, the Godlessness, and the barbarism that exist in the Soviet Union." Attacking the interventionist plea for "realism," Lindbergh ridiculed it by pointing to the change in the attitude held toward Finland by these groups, since Finland had joined in the German attack. "The murderers and plunderers of yesterday are accepted as the valiant defenders of civilization today," he mocked, "and the valiant defenders of yesterday have become the wicked aggressors of today."⁸²

Policy Recommendations

There were few prominent members of the isolationist ranks willing to make such a statement with reference to Germany as Lindbergh made at San Francisco. Most of them, whatever their personal convictions, were keenly aware of the fear and animosity which most of the American public harbored with respect to Hitler's Germany. It was probably this factor which explains the lack of unanimity that prevailed among them in the policy recommendations that they made in the weeks immediately following "Barbarossa."

They were in accord, of course, upon the necessity of opposing any American aid to the Soviet Union, and they assailed vehemently the President's remarks on that point. In articulating their position in that respect, they insisted that aid to the Soviet Union was, *ipso facto*, aid to the cause of international communism.

Herbert Hoover told a radio audience that to assist the Russians to win the war would be to win "for Stalin the grip of communism on Russia and more opportunity for it to extend over the world." More than that: aid to such a regime was not only in contravention to the

81. June 25, 1941, p. 8.

82. *New York Times*, July 2, 1941, p. 2.

dictates of sound policy, it also was a violation of morality. Hoover asked the churchgoers in his audience if they felt that aid to an atheistic regime was a move to inspire confidence on the part of the American people.⁸³

John T. Flynn saw it as leaving the U.S. no real choice: "If Russia defeats Germany, Germany will go Communist. If Germany wins, Russia will go Fascist. There is no choice for us at all. The question now is, are we going to fight to make Europe safe for communism."⁸⁴ Colonel Lindbergh saw in the President's statement that aid would be given to the U.S.S.R. as a request to the American people to "defend the Russian way of life."⁸⁵

The *New York Journal-American* could not see how a democracy could aid any tyranny. U.S. involvement in the war, it assured its readers, would make of the nation the "active ally of Communism." It warned that the liberation of Western Europe was a "HOPELESS military enterprise" and that to aid Stalin would be to assist the Russians to regain their own illegal conquests and thus would be a "morally CRIMINAL VENTURE."⁸⁶ The *Wall Street Journal* agreed that aid to the U.S.S.R. would be "bad morals" as well as unintelligent tactics and warned that a victorious Russia would be as much a threat to the U.S. as a victorious Germany.⁸⁷

The isolationists made much of this moral question. It was their reply to the call for "realism" sounded by their opponents. But, morality aside, what of a German victory? It is here that one perceives some disagreement in the ranks. To a degree that is conspicuous, they did not discuss this point. When they did, they expressed confidence in the strength of "Fortress America" or, like the *Wall Street Journal*, pointed out that a victory of one was likely to be no worse than a victory for the other. But because many of them did anticipate a German triumph, they did endorse continued aid to Britain.

The day following the start of the war, General Robert E. Wood, national chairman of America First, questioned whether the U.S. should continue to ship aid to Britain "without some assurance that everything we send will not be relayed to Stalin in accordance with Mr. Churchill's pledge."⁸⁸ Thereafter, however, few isolationists were willing to go to the length of attacking aid to Britain. The *Wall Street Journal* probably displayed a more astute perception of the public mood, as well as its own misgivings concerning an arrogant, victorious Germany, when it wrote:

83. *Ibid.*, June 30, 1941, p. 1.

85. *Ibid.*, July 2, 1941, p. 2.

87. July 2, 1941, p. 4.

88. *Christian Science Monitor*, June 24, 1941, p. 4.

84. *Ibid.*, June 23, 1941, p. 9.

86. June 27, 1941, p. 14.

Americans were willing to give up things, to pay higher taxes, to risk war to aid Britain. That willingness does not extend to Russia. An attempt to make Lease-Lend cover Russia will, in our opinion, militate against the whole program to the extent that Britain too may suffer from a popular reaction.

While hoping for a Russo-German stalemate as "eminently desirable," the *Journal* conceded that it would also be wise to use the time gained to help strengthen Britain's position.⁸⁹

Herbert Hoover also sensed the popular support of the aid to Britain policy, though, like the *Journal*, he had ardently fought the destroyer transfer of 1940 and the Lend-Lease Act. While denouncing any aid to the U.S.S.R., he called for sending bombers to Britain as rapidly as possible and was ready to turn over to Britain "the same convoy warships we should use if we joined the war."⁹⁰

There was no explicit admission from the isolationist quarters that the fall of the U.S.S.R. would confront the U.S. with renewed dangers. In one of its "Did You Know" pamphlets, issued on July 1, *America First* stated that even if Russia were conquered, "the enlarged German economy may be weakened rather than strengthened." Even if Hitler had the resources of Russia in addition to those of Europe, he would still need food supplies and other materials from the Western Hemisphere, it was argued.⁹¹ The *Commercial and Financial Chronicle* counseled that there was no need to become concerned over the prospects of Germans marching as far as the Bering Sea. Such a march, it believed, would surely "sate the German desires and reduce the urge to move on to other parts of the globe where our interests really lie."⁹²

Clearly, many of the isolationists were more fearful of Communist Russia than of Nazi Germany. Colonel Lindbergh was quite explicit on the point. Some would agree to continue aid to Britain, but aid to Russia they found abhorrent in every respect. All would agree that, on that score, the best course would be to "sit back and let Nazism and Communism fight to their deaths."⁹³

A further aspect of this interventionist-isolationist debate may be noted here. Naturally the German invasion of the Soviet Union wrought a complete transformation in the interpretation of the war on the part of the American Communists and their fellow-travellers. The imperialist war of September 1, 1939, to June 21, 1941, became overnight the people's

89. June 28, 1941, p. 4.

90. See the article by Walter Lippmann, *Washington Post*, July 1, 1941, p. 11.

91. Cole, *America First*, p. 87.

92. June 28, 1941, p. 4013.

93. Cole, *America First*, p. 86.

war for peace and democracy. To the followers of Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism, this development necessitated a reversal in policy stand. The interventionists, rather than the isolationists, found themselves attached with the onus of Communist endorsement and support of their position. Both groups poured out scorn and ridicule on the preposterous spectacle of this *volte-face* in the party line,⁹⁴ and the isolationists could not forego the opportunity to turn the tables. America First publications during July, August, and September were charging that Communists attended interventionist meetings, that the mere mention of Stalin and the Soviet Union evoked cheers at such meetings, and that the *Daily Worker* and *New Masses* were distributed to all present.⁹⁵

MORALITY AND FOREIGN POLICY: RELIGIOUS ISSUES

The foregoing account of the political and military interpretations of the war in Russia presented by the interventionist and isolationist elites offers testimony to the moral and religious questions evoked by the new conflict. It was not without reason that interventionists prefaced their own outlook and policy proposals with a call for realism nor that the isolationists spoke of the immorality of American support of the Soviet Union. Both sensed the alternate dangers and opportunities—depending on one's point of view—that the religious implications of the war might produce among the American people. Coupled with the ideological gulf that separated the U.S. and the Soviet Union was the fact that, from the nature of Soviet policy and doctrine, many religious people regarded the bolshevik movement as something akin to the anti-Christ.

The German government was fully aware of the existence of this attitude. It sought, in its presentation of the causes and purposes of its daring Russian enterprise, to utilize the Bolshevik denial of God and its persecution of the church to the fullest extent. In his proclamation of June 22, Chancellor Hitler at one point referred to himself not only as the "responsible leader of the German Reich but also the representative of European culture and civilization,"⁹⁶ while Foreign Minister Ribbentrop depicted the Germans as fighting "to save the entire civilized world from the deadly dangers of Bolshevism and clear the way for true social progress in Europe."⁹⁷ In Rome, the Fascist organ *Il Messaggero* announced: "The anti-Bolshevik war has assumed the aspects of a

94. A convenient summary of the party's gyrations may be found in the collection of *Daily Worker* editorials given by William C. Bullitt in *The Great Globe Itself: A Preface to World Affairs* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946), pp. 233-92.

95. Cole, *America First*, p. 116.

96. Quoted in Jones and Myers (eds.), *Documents on American Foreign Relations*, III, 355.

97. *New York Times*, June 23, 1941, p. 4.

European crusade, but it is even more vast. It is a sweeping wide-world crusade, a veritable universal reaction against all the barbarities carried out in Russia by the Soviet regime."⁹⁸ To develop further the religious rationalization of the war on Russia, Hitler issued another declaration promising to the people of Russia the restoration of the Orthodox church.⁹⁹

Primarily the German propaganda maneuvers in this category were directed toward Roman Catholics. Long in conflict with Marxist doctrine and Soviet policies, the Roman See in March of 1937 had issued an encyclical letter "On Atheistic Communism," *Divini redemptoris*, denouncing Communist teachings. The encyclical had warned: "Communism is intrinsically wrong, and no one who would save Christian civilization may collaborate with it in any undertaking whatsoever."¹⁰⁰ Seen in that light, it is clear that conscientious Catholics might well entertain misgivings over a policy of supporting the Communist government of the Soviet Union in its war with Germany.

Long before June 22, 1941, some Catholic spokesmen in the U.S. had expressed the conviction that Soviet Russia was a greater menace to mankind than was Nazi Germany. In April of 1939 the Jesuit periodical *America* printed an article by Thomas E. Davitt which asserted that, if the U.S. were allied with Russia in case of war, "it would seem most certain that Catholics would be justified in conscience in resisting conscription for military service."¹⁰¹ Bishop Duffy of Buffalo had remarked that same year that, in such an alliance, he would "advise every Catholic boy in the United States to refuse to serve."¹⁰²

During the Welles-Oumansky conversations in early 1941, the editors of *America* had asked "why this Government, so hot against Hitler and Mussolini, seems to apprehend no peril from Stalin at work in the U.S., and why it . . . has adopted a 'policy of mild helpfulness to the relentless liquidators of the Kremlin.' Is Soviet Russia," asked *America*, "one of the democracies which we must defend?"¹⁰³ That same month (March, 1941), in a sermon preached at St. Patrick's in New York, Monsignor Fulton J. Sheen had declared to his congregation: "We cannot say we are fighting for the Kingdom of God and his justice when we call Russia a natural friend."¹⁰⁴ In an address broadcast on The Catholic Hour over

98. Quoted in *ibid.*, June 29, 1941, p. 3.

99. Edwin L. James, *ibid.*, June 29, 1941, Sec. IV, p. 3.

100. *Encyclical Letter (Divini redemptoris) of His Holiness, Pope Pius XI*, Vatican Press Translation (Washington: National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1937), p. 40.

101. "Can We Ally with Russia in Case of War?" *America*, LX (April 1, 1939), 606.

102. Quoted in S. R. Herbert, "The Vatican and the Nazi-Soviet Pact," *Protestant Digest*, III (June-July, 1941), 63.

103. Editorial, "Our Cooperation with Stalin," *America*, LXIV (March 1, 1941), 574-75.

104. *New York Times*, March 3, 1941, p. 14.

NBC in April of 1941, the Catholic prelate had reiterated this position and added: "Mark these words: The enemy of the world in the near future is going to be Russia."¹⁰⁵ In May the editors of the *Catholic World* had been sufficiently concerned over U.S.-Soviet relations to editorialize on the subject. Observing that the nearer the U.S. came to involvement in the war the more propaganda "in favor of Russia increases," they commented that calling Stalin to the defense of democracy would be comparable to calling John Dillinger to the defense of law and order. Granting that there was a crude logic to the enlistment of the Soviet Union in the anti-Axis camp, the publication insisted that "moral instinct" rebelled at the thought and expressed the hope that it might some day hear President Roosevelt announce that he would not accept Russia as an ally of the U.S.¹⁰⁶

In this broad context, the reaction of American Catholics to the Russian war was a matter of particular significance. As will be discussed later, President Roosevelt was quite concerned with the problem in making policy decisions. It is true that Catholics like other Americans were participants in the interventionist-isolationist debate of 1941, and the war in Russia was not conspicuous in producing converts among either group. This direct confrontation of religious and moral issues did, nevertheless, serve to complicate matters for Catholics.

Determined Catholic spokesmen for the interventionist ideology moved quickly after June 22 to attest to the fact that their convictions regarding Nazism were unchanged and to spike the notion that the German Chancellor had suddenly become a crusading knight of Christendom. On June 28 fifteen nationally prominent Roman Catholic clergymen and laymen issued a statement through the headquarters of Fight for Freedom in New York. The fifteen agreed that communism remained the foe of Christianity, but they reminded the American public that the Nazis were also busily at work exterminating the influence of the church in areas under their control. Referring to an address made by the Most Reverend Joseph P. Hurley, Bishop of the Diocese of St. Augustine, Florida, the previous spring, they also agreed that the day might come in the future when "the menacing thing that now cowers in the Kremlin" would be the number one enemy of God and man. They insisted, however, that this dubious distinction was still the property of Nazism. Accordingly, they urged their co-religionists not to permit Hitler's propaganda to "confuse" them and warned that Germany had to be stopped

¹⁰⁵. Printed under the title, "What Are We Fighting For?" *Scribner's Commentator*, X (May, 1941), 81-85.

¹⁰⁶. "Russia as an Ally," *The Catholic World*, CLIII (May, 1941), 130-36.

"even if . . . we and the Soviets are temporarily on the same side in an effort to resist a common foe."¹⁰⁷

The day following the issuance of this manifesto, the attention of the world was focused on the Vatican in anticipation of a world-wide broadcast scheduled by Pope Pius XII. There were press reports that the Holy See was under pressure to endorse the anti-Bolshevik "crusade"¹⁰⁸ and some indications that American isolationists were hopeful that they might find words of comfort for their cause in the Pontiff's remarks. The capitol correspondent of one vehemently anti-Roosevelt newspaper reported that "there was a disposition on the part of non-interventionist Senators to await Sunday's radio address by the Pope" before reacting to the President's statement that U.S. aid would be given to the U.S.S.R.¹⁰⁹ It is interesting that those who so forcefully denounced communism, and well remembered the encyclical *Divini redemptoris*, did not also recall that in the same month of March, 1937, the Papacy had issued another encyclical, *Mit Brennender Sorge*, wherein Nazi persecution of the Church was denounced, Nazi racist doctrines condemned, and Fascist deification of the state protested.¹¹⁰

In any event, if any expected an expression of approval from the Holy See for the German war on Russia, they were disappointed. In a brief homily, Pope Pius abstained from any direct mention of that conflict, using the occasion rather to exhort the faithful everywhere to endure all trials in the ordeal through which humankind was passing and contrasting the fitful and imperfect ways of men with the sublime and inscrutable workings of Providence.¹¹¹

A week after the Pontiff's address, on July 6, the American people heard another message of great significance dealing with the religious issues of the war in Russia. The speaker was the Most Reverend Joseph P. Hurley, Bishop of St. Augustine, probably the most outspoken interventionist in the American hierarchy. It was Bishop Hurley who, in an address made on April 30, had branded isolationists as "those dyspeptic moralists [who] are the dupes of a few men who have no interest what-

107. The fifteen were: Dr. William A. Agar, Rev. J. C. Callan, William D. Carmichael, Jr., William J. Donovan, Rev. George B. Ford, Ross J. Hoffman, Rev. J. C. McHugh, Francis E. McMahon, Rt. Rev. Joseph L. O'Brien, William Hard, Mrs. Ruth O'Keefe, General John F. O'Ryan, Rev. T. Laurason Riggs, Rt. Rev. John A. Ryan, and Michael Williams. *New York Times*, June 29, 1941, p. 10.

108. Herbert L. Matthews, *New York Times*, June 30, 1941, p. 1.

109. George Rothwell Brown, *New York Journal-American*, June 28, 1941, p. 2.

110. See the article by Theodore Maynard, "Catholics and the Nazis," *American Mercury*, LIII (October, 1941), 391-400.

111. The text of the Pontiff's message is in the *New York Times*, June 30, 1941, p. 6.

ever in morals, but who are seeking to divide and discourage us in America."¹¹²

In the speech of July 6, bearing the interesting title "Papal Pronouncements and Foreign Policy,"¹¹³ the Bishop of St. Augustine prefaced his remarks with a denial that he was speaking for the Vatican or with its consent. He nevertheless observed that, while the U.S. government and the Holy See pursued policies independently of one another, "he who runs may read . . . a striking parallelism between their attitudes where moral questions are at issue." He then denounced those who, he charged, distorted papal pronouncements in order to make it appear that the U.S. was not morally justified in fighting to defend its vital interests. He even asserted that, in his view, the unscrupulous tactics of the Nazis had made the Congressional declaration of war "no longer in style" and called upon the nation to realize that only the President was in command of the knowledge necessary to decide the question of war or peace.

The Bishop then trained his sights on the implications of the Russian war and, in characteristically unequivocal language, declared:

The Nazi sympathizers over here are trying to make out that it is a holy crusade against Communism. Crusade forsooth: Not God, but the enemy of God wills it; its standard is not the Cross but the swastika which a great Pontiff called the foe of the Cross of Christ; the rape of Poland is scarcely a recommendation for a Christian knight; and the recluse of Berchtesgaden is badly cast for the role of Peter the Hermit. . . . In point of urgency the Nazi remains Enemy No. 1 of America and of the world.

Interventionists were immensely heartened by these words. They were impressed by the fact that, though Bishop Hurley had disclaimed that he was speaking with the approval of the Pope, before his becoming Bishop of St. Augustine in August of 1940 he had spent twelve years in the diplomatic service of the Vatican. One prominent commentator was probably reflecting at least the hopes of those who labored in the interventionist vineyard when he wrote: "The significance of the speech lies in Bishop Hurley's relations with the Vatican. The impression in well-informed Catholic circles is that, notwithstanding his disclaimer, he did in fact present these views with the approval or consent of the Pope."¹¹⁴

The validity of this statement would seem to have depended on which "Catholic circles" one regarded as "well-informed." Needless to say, Bishop Hurley's address drew a spirited protest from isolationist Catholics. The Catholic Laymen's Committee for Peace, whose secretary

112. Quoted in Maynard, "Catholics and the Nazis," *American Mercury*, p. 398.

113. The text is in the *Washington Post*, July 11, 1941, p. 8.

114. Ernest K. Lindley, *Washington Post*, July 11, 1941, p. 9.

(William T. Leonard) was chairman of the Brooklyn chapter of America First, sent telegrams to all Catholic Bishops in the U.S., asking each to issue a public statement making it clear that Hurley had not spoken for American Catholics, especially in his remarks on the obsolescence of Congressional action to declare war.¹¹⁵ It remained for a prelate of the church to make some reply.

In the person of the Most Reverend Francis J. L. Beckman, Archbishop of Dubuque, isolationism possessed a champion whose zeal for his cause was as marked as that of Bishop Hurley. The Archbishop had long been an extreme critic of American foreign policy, denying in no uncertain terms the moral validity of American intervention in the European conflict. Indicative of the strength of his convictions was the speech he made to an America First rally in Dubuque on June 21, in which he charged that the 1940 election peace pledges were being betrayed by interventionists whom he likened to "modern Herods, Pilates, and Neros."¹¹⁶ Here was a man eminently fitted to take issue with the Bishop of St. Augustine. This the Archbishop did in a radio address on July 27.¹¹⁷

First, Archbishop Beckman directed his remarks toward a general denunciation of the interventionist position. The phrase "aid to the allies short of war" he dismissed as a "slimy slogan" and a "supreme insult to the intelligence of our people." Should the U.S. become involved in the war, he warned that it would only prolong the conflict, produce world-wide chaos, and provide a "fertile soil for the cockle of a new type of communism."

Archbishop Beckman then turned to the concrete issues of policy toward the Russo-German war. He first inquired how in this "Christian democracy" could one "account for the coddling of Communists in every responsible branch of our Government?" Warning that Communist agents and dupes were bent on leading America into war, he went on to declare:

Today the mask is off: it is communism, communism, communism everywhere gaining ground. We are in danger of being slowly poisoned, debilitated and disarmed by this monstrous tyranny. Now, in the name of the four freedoms, all aid to Russia is urged upon us while Britain in desperation has allied herself with a devil. So Britain has been fighting the battle of Christianity—there is a fallacy exploded. If we get into this war now we shall be nothing more or less than a criminal nation, and let no one look to our Catholic people for comfort.

115. *New York Times*, July 14, 1941, p. 14.

116. *New York Journal-American*, June 22, 1941, p. 4.

117. The text of the speech is given in the *Congressional Record*, LXXXVII, A3645-46.

He solemnly called upon all Bishops of the Church to pay careful heed to the encyclical *Divini redemptoris* and, after quoting from it several passages, concluded: "So there can be no collaboration for communism as far as the Catholic Church in this country is concerned. We have been pushed far enough in this abominable game of aid to Britain and bolshevism." He urged all Christians to stand up and be counted in their opposition to war.

There were, of course, other Catholic voices raised in protest against any U.S. aid to, or collaboration with, Soviet Russia—some of them representative of moderate interventionist views. The national commander of the Catholic War Veterans, Thomas Walsh, wrote to the President on June 28 asking of the Chief Executive that he "reconsider" his announcement "to act in the matter of assistance to Godless Russia and not commit our country or our people to aid or assist in any way whatsoever any nation whose totalitarian form of government and Godless ideology is entirely incompatible to democratic ideals."¹¹⁸ The Reverend John Tracy Ellis of Catholic University at Washington, D.C., said in a speech at the University of Virginia on June 29: "The church will be perfectly right if it should denounce such assistance, for it is with singularly bad grace that the American nation go publicly before the world in defense of the four freedoms, especially the freedom of worship of God, and then turn to give aid to Russia." Monsignor Ellis went on to announce his continued support of aid for Britain and said he would not object if British authorities passed on some such aid to the Russians, but he urged that "at any cost" such assistance be kept from the American conscience.¹¹⁹

Similar expressions of opinion were sounded in the Roman Catholic press. Father Coughlin and his ilk, hardly representative of American Catholics, rose to new heights of defamation in their scurrilous attacks on administration policy in the pages of *Social Justice*. Renewed in the faith by the turn of events on June 22, perhaps the mildest comment from that quarter was that the encyclical of Pope Pius XI barred all Catholics from cooperating "in any manner whatsoever" with communism.¹²⁰

In the pages of leading national Catholic publications there were also manifestations of outright opposition or, at the least, serious misgivings over the prospects of U.S. assistance to Russia during June and July. Of these representative Catholic organs, the most isolationist in sentiment was *The Catholic World*, edited by the Reverend James M.

¹¹⁸ *New York Times*, June 29, 1941, p. 10.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, June 30, 1941, p. 4.

¹²⁰ Editorial, "Uncle Sam and Uncle Joe," *Social Justice*, August 18, 1941, p. 8.

Gillis. Reverend Gillis definitely spoke in the tradition of the Archbishop of Dubuque. In his first editorial after the war in Russia began, entitled "Covenant with Hell," he assailed the "realism" of the interventionists and asked:

Has our religion become so diluted that we do not revolt at the suggestion that we accept help from men who swear to extinguish the lights of heaven and who use ridicule and blasphemy and obscenity and wholesale murder in the attempt to get rid of Christ and God? If we have fallen that low, it makes no difference whether we go into the war or stay out. The soul of the nation is lost; we are already in perdition.¹²¹

This lamentation was followed, characteristically, with extended quotations from *Divini redemptoris*.

America was less vehement and more moderately isolationist in its sentiment. It expressed sympathetic understanding for England's acceptance of Russia as an ally. It denounced Hitler as a "scoundrel" and termed his posture of a "crusader" as "ridiculous." It would not endorse aid to Russia, however, though it rather gloomily acknowledged that if the President were determined to pursue such a course he would do it. It did ask that such a program not be permitted to lessen the opposition to domestic communism, that the record of the Soviet Union be kept always in mind, and that some guarantees be obtained to insure that such aid would never be used against the U.S. It also counseled its readers to bear in mind that the Soviet government was an enemy of God and of mankind.¹²²

The more liberal weekly, *Commonweal*, also refused to endorse aid to the Soviet Union. Its regular contributor, Michael Williams, one of the signers of the manifesto of the fifteen, used his weekly column to urge Catholics to realize that Hitler aspired to world dominion and was merely seeking to use the church and the Papacy for his own selfish purposes. He reiterated his belief that Nazism was a more deadly foe of Christianity "because it is so much more powerful than communism."¹²³

The editors of *Commonweal* did not go that far. They contented themselves initially with some melancholy comment on the disposition of the interventionists to abandon all mention of ideals and principles and to speak only in terms of "military expediency."¹²⁴

It is difficult to generalize about the Roman Catholic reaction to the war in Russia. Perhaps the most that can be said is that, for those

121. *The Catholic World*, CLIII (August, 1941), 517.

122. Editorial, "Russia Enters the War," *America*, LXV (July 5, 1941), 350-51; and "No Paladins Here," *ibid.* (July 12, 1941), 378.

123. "Views and Reviews," *The Commonweal*, XXXIV (July 12, 1941), 277.

124. Editorial, "Cynicism toward Principle," *ibid.*, 276-78.

of interventionist views, the prospects of entering into cooperation with Soviet Russia were even less appealing than to other interventionists, and the obstacles to the endorsement of such a policy were more formidable. For those of isolationist views, it was further vindication of their position. The Papacy, it was true, had branded both nazism and sovietism as foes of Christianity in two encyclicals issued in March of 1937. Also, events conspired to underscore the dangers to the church presented by Nazi political domination shortly after the war in Russia began. Early in July reports reached the U.S. of a pastoral letter drawn up at a conference in Fulda, several weeks earlier, by the Roman Catholic bishops of Germany. The Fulda letter bitterly protested the anti-Christian actions of the Nazi German government.¹²⁵

Still, all the isolationist asked was that both Germany and Russia be left alone to fight their own battle. He was not likely to be embarrassed by the existence of *Mit brennender Sorge* or even by the Fulda letter. In advocating a policy of active support for the Soviet Union, the Catholic interventionist must have found *Divini redemptoris* a major restraining influence. It is no wonder that the President was so concerned over this segment of public opinion and worked so assiduously to marshal it in support of his policies. Indeed, he was prompted to make diplomatic representations to the Vatican.

If generalizations concerning Roman Catholic opinion are hazardous, they are perilous indeed when one attempts to survey the opinion of Protestant churches and spokesmen. By its very nature Protestantism does not lend itself to the type of analysis that is feasible in dealing with Catholicism. Its voices are too diverse, its discipline more flexible, its ecclesiastical government divided amongst numerous denominations. A practical difficulty is also presented by the fact that many denominational publications habitually refrain from commenting upon political questions.

It can be said that among those Protestant leaders and spokesmen who had previously articulated their position on American foreign policy, the war in Russia seemed to produce a reaction not unlike that produced among other interventionists and isolationists. The Right Reverend Henry W. Hobson, for instance, who was Episcopal Bishop of Southern Ohio and who also served as chairman of the Fight for Freedom Committee, joined with his associates in that organization of "all-outers" to warn his countrymen: "The danger is that the Quislings and Nazi stooges in this country will now try to lull us with the bedtime story that Hitler is saving the world from Communism, which all Americans

125. *New York Times*, July 7, 1941, p. 1.

abhor." He and the other officers of Fight for Freedom urged the President to seize the opportunity to "clear the Atlantic" by committing U.S. naval forces.¹²⁶

Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr, one of the most distinguished Protestant theologians of the era and professor at Union Theological Seminary in New York, was also noted long before June 22 for his outspoken interventionist opinions. He was not dismayed by the prospect of an alignment with Russia. Speaking for the Union for Democratic Action, Dr. Niebuhr on June 24 urged that "every form of aid to Britain be immediately increased and that our nation support Britain by both air and naval action." He also went a step further, to advocate "that Russia be given every possible economical and technical assistance in cooperation with Britain."¹²⁷ And in the *Nation* he had this to say for those who were concerned over the morality of assisting Russia:

But our "idealists," our men of thought and "conscience," are always distressed by flexibility in strategy and morbidly fearful lest it obscure the basic issue and make a struggle meaningless. So the ridiculous idea that we are being asked to fight for the "Russian way of life" gains credence among us. . . .

If our Western world perished before the onslaughts of an unprincipled strategist because its "idealism" lacked strategic flexibility, history might regard the outcome as a just punishment for our blindness. But such a judgment would not make the result any more tolerable.¹²⁸

The nondenominational national weekly, *Christian Century*, presented a striking contrast to the views of Niebuhr and Hobson. Strongly inclined to pacifism and decidedly noninterventionist in outlook, the editors of that publication were impressed with the manner in which the entire face of the war had changed. They believed that because London and Washington were as fearful of a Russian as of a German victory, all parties but Germany were actually fighting for a stalemate. They saw hope for a negotiated peace and an end to the agony of war. As for aid to Russia, they deplored the President's nonapplication of the Neutrality Act and asked that no aid be sent until U.S., British, and Chinese needs were "fully met"¹²⁹—which was tantamount to saying "never."

In the pages of the *Christian Century* the voices of Oswald Garrison Villard and of the Reverend John Haynes Holmes were also raised in

126. See the advertisement entitled "The Time Is Now," in the *New York Times*, June 23, 1941, p. 10, sponsored by Fight for Freedom.

127. *New York Times*, June 25, 1941, p. 7.

128. "New Allies, Old Issues," *The Nation*, CLIII (July 19, 1941), 51-52.

129. "Hitler Attacks Stalin," *Christian Century*, LVIII (July 9, 1941), 855-856; and "American Aid for Russia," *ibid.*, 875.

protest against the prospects of collaboration with the Soviet Union. Villard wrote that the interventionists' realism was an evidence of the nation's "moral disintegration" and its increasing disposition to believe that "might makes right."¹³⁰ Reverend Holmes was filled with apprehensions as to the consequences of a victory over Germany in which Russia played a leading role. He believed that "after an immeasurably exhausting effort to destroy nazi totalitarianism, the world will have succeeded only in putting in its place a more powerful, more widely extended and therefore more formidable communist totalitarianism."¹³¹ Churchill's support of Russia he likened to the Archangel Michael's embracing the cause of Beelzebub in a war with Satan.¹³²

Finally, it may be noted, with respect to the initial Protestant reaction, that the denominational publications which did comment on the new war seemed rather prone to view it as a struggle between two forces equally evil and to regard the prospects of American support for Russia with something less than enthusiasm. *The Presbyterian* wrote that "believing people are disquieted over the implications of the idea that now that Chancellor Hitler has attacked Russia, the Soviets thereby become an object of our solicitous care and active help." It looked upon the antagonists as "alike determined to ruin the world with their pernicious philosophies" and warned that any aid sent to Russia would mean that much less available for England.¹³³ A Baptist publication, *The Watchman-Examiner*, felt that surely the democracies would "not bleed and sacrifice to sustain Moscow tyranny and give it the prestige of victory" and was probably rather typical in observing that judgment had fallen upon Stalin.¹³⁴

Before leaving the subject of religious elements involved in the climate of opinion during June and July, a comment is in order concerning Jewish reactions. Forever mindful of the savagery and cruelty of Nazi anti-Semitism, American Jewish leaders were generally less disturbed than any other religious group over the implications of the new international alignment. Jewish spokesmen promptly made it clear that they were unmoved in their conviction that Hitler's Germany was the principal enemy of mankind.¹³⁵ *The Contemporary Jewish Record*, published by the American Jewish Committee, conducted a survey of editorial opin-

¹³⁰ "Our Moral Confusion," *ibid.* (July 9, 1941), 881-82.

¹³¹ "If Russia Wins," *ibid.* (July 30, 1941), 954-56.

¹³² "Woe in Heaven Again: A Parable," *ibid.* (July 23, 1941), 932-33.

¹³³ Editorial, "Russia: Quo Vadimus?" *The Presbyterian*, CXI (July 10, 1941), 4.

¹³⁴ Editorial, "Crazy Quilt of Disorder," *The Watchman-Examiner*, XXIX (July 10, 1941), 736-37.

¹³⁵ See the accounts of the sermons delivered in the synagogues of Greater New York on Saturday, June 28, in the *New York Times*, June 29, 1941, p. 12.

ion on the new war in the Yiddish and Anglo-Jewish press in the U.S. and reached the conclusion that: "In the minds of the editorial writers . . . there was no doubt about the urgent necessity of rendering aid to Russia in its struggle against Hitlerism, as the most dangerous enemy of democracy and of the Jews. . . ."¹³⁶

THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND THE RUSSIAN WAR

The outlook and the policy recommendations of the interventionist and isolationist elites, as surveyed on the preceding pages, were focused upon the objective of enlisting in their support the general public and thereby exerting greater influence upon the policy-makers in Washington. It is now pertinent to inquire into the reactions of this mass public to the great conflict that began on June 22. How did the electorate respond—how were its attitudes toward the war in Europe changed, if at all, and how did it look upon the possibility of an American-Soviet *rapprochement*? Was it indifferent to the death struggle of the two totalitarian giants, or did it conceive American interests as involved in the outcome?

Immediately following the German invasion of June 22, the *New York Times*, through eight of its regional correspondents, undertook to survey the general public reaction to the war in Russia. The following Sunday it published a series of articles presenting the analyses of public sentiment as appraised by journalists in Boston, Atlanta, Chicago, Omaha, St. Paul, Dallas, San Francisco, and Portland.¹³⁷

F. Lauriston Bullard wrote from Boston that the attitude of New England seemed unchanged with respect to the war in general. He saw no significant shifts of opinion among any groups and felt that there was an upsurge in support for aid to Britain. As for the question of communism, he thought the remark of Governor Blood of New Hampshire was typical: "Those of whom we formerly disapproved officially are now officially the friends of our government. This is that kind of a war."

Edwin Camp, in Atlanta, felt that the disposition of the Southeast was to welcome the new strain on German resources and to be more deeply convinced of the necessity to aid Britain. Russia, he wrote, was "equally detested" but less feared than the Nazis, so that there was a renewed belief in the necessity of stopping Germany. However, he reported there was "considerable sentiment against any formal participation by the United States as an ally of Russia" and a feeling that aid to Russia was a "military impossibility."

136. "Digest of Public Opinion: The Nazi Attack on Russia," *Contemporary Jewish Record*, IV (August, 1941), 408. The survey also found that the Jewish publications studied were outspoken anti-Communist but believed that the German menace left no choice but support for Russia.

137. All of the articles appear in the *New York Times*, June 29, 1941, Sec. IV, p. 7.

From Chicago, Luther S. Horne wrote that there was a strong sentiment that a mutual destruction of the two antagonists would be the "ideal solution" and that there was such cordial hatred of Stalinism that the interventionists were moving "cautiously." "The anti-war factions," he reported, "are doing a twenty-four hour job arguing that democratic America cannot conscientiously fight shoulder to shoulder with undemocratic Red Russia." In fact, he thought there was considerable evidence that the Mid-western public was rather "bewildered."

The correspondents in St. Paul and Omaha—Herbert Lewis and Roland M. Jones—found convincing evidence that, though there was no lessening in the opposition to communism, the citizenry of those districts generally continued to believe that Germany was the more dangerous foe.

In Dallas, Walter C. Hornaday saw indications of a more militant anti-German response. He reported that most people in that area doubted that the sending of supplies to Russia would be of any value, since they anticipated a quick German victory, but they were willing to support such aid if the President deemed it useful. There was a definite feeling, he believed, that aid to Britain should be increased in any event.

On the Pacific coast, Don Douglass found no change in the willingness of the public to see America enter the war. Writing from San Francisco, he estimated that 70 per cent of the people in that region had been ready for war before June 22, and the invasion of Russia had not altered this. The common response, he reported, was to anticipate a quick German victory and an ominous augmentation of Nazi power. While in Portland, Richard L. Neuberger found interventionists disturbed over the prospects that hatred of communism might lead to a strong public resistance to any policy of support for the U.S.S.R. He reported that interventionist spokesmen were hard at work to distinguish between aid to the Russian nation and to the cause of international communism.

A more systematic study of the effects which the new war produced on American attitudes was undertaken by the American Institute of Public Opinion during late June and early July. Its findings seem particularly noteworthy and raise several interesting questions.

First, the AIPO made a survey of a nationwide representative sample of the electorate on two issues that had for several months been prominent in foreign policy discussions and which were highly productive of controversy. The purpose of the survey was to determine what changes, if any, had been produced with respect to America's assuming responsibility for convoying war supplies to Britain and on sentiment con-

cerning American entry into the war. These same questions had been asked in a poll conducted earlier in June, just before the start of the Russian war. The comparative results, published on July 9, were:¹³⁸

1. Should the United States Navy convoy ships carrying war supplies to Great Britain?

<i>July</i> : Favor convoys	56%	<i>June 15</i> : Favor convoys	55%
Oppose convoys	35	Oppose convoys	38
Undecided	9	Undecided	7

2. Should the United States enter the war now?

<i>July</i> : Yes	21%	<i>June 15</i> : Yes	24%
No	79	No	76

The Institute then asked a national sample, "Has the new war between Russia and Germany changed your attitude toward helping Britain?" The results were:

Yes	12%
No	83
Undecided	5

Those who answered affirmatively were asked whether they were more in favor or less in favor of aiding Britain. Two-thirds of them were more in favor.

In general, the Institute detected three points of view with respect to the effects of the Russian war on aid to Britain. First, and most common, was the reaction that the war did not affect the policy of aiding Britain, since the goal of the U.S. was still the defeat of Germany. A typical comment of this group, according to Dr. Gallup, was that the Russian war merely made aid to Britain less difficult. Second, those who favored more aid to Britain expressed the opinion that the British had been given an opportunity to strike at Germany and expressed fear of the consequences of a German victory in Russia. Finally, among those who opposed aid to Britain, the war in Russia left their attitudes unchanged. A typical comment here was that the Russian war had "nothing to do with us" and, further, that America needed all it produced to arm itself. This latter comment was also made by those who reported themselves less in favor of helping Britain.¹³⁹

With specific reference to the Russian-German conflict, the opinion polls found that American sympathies were overwhelmingly with the

¹³⁸ Dr. George Gallup, *Washington Post*, July 9, 1941, p. 11.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, July 11, 1941, p. 9.

Russians, which would indicate that, despite the repeated assertions of some isolationists that the war had "nothing to do with us," the public was keenly interested in the outcome of the struggle. On June 24 the AIPO asked of a national cross-section: "In the present war between Russia and Germany, which side would you like to see win—Russia or Germany?"¹⁴⁰ The results were:

Germany	4%	No difference	17%
Russia	72	No opinion	7

An analysis made by the Office of Public Opinion Research on July 10 corroborated these findings.¹⁴¹ According to this source, the percentages were:

Germany	4%	No difference	20%
Russia	71	No opinion	5

The AIPO made a further analysis of its data from this survey, examining the response on this question among upper, middle, and lower income groups, and among Roman Catholics and Protestants. It did not find any significant variations by economic status or religion. The results among all these groups were, in Dr. Gallup's words, "virtually the same."¹⁴²

These findings led Dr. Gallup to conclude that the public attitude toward the war was influenced only slightly by ideological considerations. The majority of the public, he believed, saw nazism as a dangerous force bent on world conquest and a military menace to be feared. Communism, on the other hand, the majority saw as a danger that could materialize through "internal contamination," and most were confident that the U.S. had nothing to fear on that score.¹⁴³

While it was true, according to all evidence, that the overwhelming majority of the public did favor a Russian victory over Germany, the American abhorrence of Soviet communism was nevertheless not without its effects. These ideological factors may be easily discerned in the results of an AIPO poll on the question of American aid to Russia. On June 24 the Institute initiated a poll on this question: "Should the United States government supply Russia with arms, airplanes, and other

¹⁴⁰ Cantrill (ed.), *Public Opinion, 1935-1946*, p. 1187.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Washington Post*, July 11, 1941, p. 9. A breakdown of the poll, by these groupings, is given in Cantrill (ed.), *Public Opinion*, p. 1187.

¹⁴³ *Washington Post*, July 13, 1941, Sec. II, p. 12.

war materials on the same basis that we supply them to Britain?" The response was:¹⁴⁴

Yes	35%	No	54%	No opinion	11%
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Quite clearly the American people did not feel the same community of interests with the Soviet Union that they did with Great Britain. While preferring a Russian victory over one by Germany, the majority of them were not prepared to extend assistance to Russia on the generous terms that had been devised for Britain. There can be little doubt that this less than enthusiastic response to the suggestion of helping Russia stemmed in good measure from ideological factors. Since the question of American aid was one of the most important policy issues provoked by the Russo-German conflict, this poll was particularly indicative of the opinion problems which were to confront the policy-makers in the coming months. Some reservations may be attached to the belief of the director of the AIPO that ideological considerations were of negligible import.

Overall, Dr. Gallup analyzed the American public as affected by mid-July in this manner by the war in Russia. The AIPO studies indicated that those designated as "extreme interventionists" thought that the new war made it more necessary than ever to send aid to Britain. They regarded the war as a breathing spell to be exploited by winning the battle of the Atlantic. To insure the winning of this victory they advocated U.S. naval convoying of supplies to Britain. The fact that Russia as well as Britain stood between America and Germany they believed was "all to the good."

Those designated as "extreme isolationists" on the other hand saw in the new conflict more reason than ever for their isolationism. Some of this group seemed to believe that the Germans would quickly win anyway so that any aid sent to Russia would be wasted; while others were inclined to believe that Russia and Germany might destroy one another.

The "middle of the road" segment of the public, interventionist in sentiment but opposed to America's direct participation in the war, saw "new hope" in the invasion of Russia that America could stay out. Of this group Gallup wrote:

To them it is now a question of keeping both Russia and Britain going. They argue that if we can do that, the United States will not have to go into war.

Hence they are for aid to Britain and for aid to Russia on the ground that such aid will actually keep us out of the war.¹⁴⁵

144. Cantrill (ed.), *Public Opinion*, p. 1102.

145. Dr. George Gallup, *Washington Post*, July 13, 1941, Sec. II, p. 2.

Here again some reservations to Gallup's analysis seem warranted by the AIPO findings. On the crucial question of aid, those who were willing to put aid to Russia in the same category as aid to Britain were definitely in a minority. This is shown in polls taken later in the summer, as well as the one of June 24.

If such reservations are entered, however, they need not detract from the fact that American sympathies were solidly on the side of the Russians. The Russo-German war was not regarded with indifference as a mere instance of "thieves falling out." There seemed to be a rather clear recognition that American interests were involved. Soviet communism continued to be detested; there was pronounced skepticism about the wisdom of any direct material aid to the U.S.S.R.; but of greater long-range policy significance was the fact that Germany obviously was still regarded as the national enemy by the great majority of the public. Soviet ideology was hated, but Soviet power was not feared. Here was the key component, probably, of the emerging climate of opinion. Coupled with the "new hope" which Dr. Gallup's researches betokened, that the war in Russia might prevent American involvement, there was provided a solid foundation for the formulation of official policies directed toward supporting the Soviet Union. These opinion polls indicated that the isolationists had little basis for their renewed hopes that Russia's entry into the war would strengthen their position and that interventionists were under no compulsion to assume a defensive posture. For the "man in the street" Communist ideology was a disturbing factor in the new situation, but it did not cause him to alter his views on the threat that was posed to American security by Nazi Germany.

CONGRESS AND THE RUSSIAN WAR

By the nature of the steps first taken by the executive in developing national policy toward the Soviet Union after June 22—steps which were, to be sure, influenced by considerations of factors in addition to public opinion—there was little opportunity for Congress to participate directly in the policy process. The President offered to send aid to the U.S.S.R., but he made no specific commitment and the aid was for long on a cash basis. If the decision were to be made to place the Soviet Union on the lend-lease rolls, or to provide large-scale assistance through other means, Congress would have to give its consent eventually by the provision of funds to finance the program. The response of the legislative branch to the Russo-German war thus was a factor of great importance in the emerging framework of policy decision.

Congressional reaction to the Russian war rather clearly reflected the apprehensions and hopes held, respectively, by the private spokesmen of interventionism and isolationism as a result of the Russian war. Like the private foreign policy elites, the legislators seemed to have over-estimated the extent to which the public would be guided by its antipathy toward the U.S.S.R. and communism in interpreting the new situation. During late June and throughout July, interventionist congressmen were inclined to be decidedly reticent in commenting on the Russian war. The isolationists, however, were quite articulate, and responded with zest.

On June 23, for instance, Senator Clark of Missouri told the press it was "a case of dog eat dog," that it proved the "instability of European alliances" and the "necessity of our staying out of all of them." Senator Bulow (D., S.D.) saw no cause for alarm. He believed that Hitler would "soon have so much territory he will have plenty of trouble handling it."¹⁴⁶ Senator Wheeler (D., Mont.) was even convinced that it was a "favorable development for the United States." His reasons were obvious: "I don't think the American people will stand for us to tie up with the Communists. I think there is more likelihood now that we can keep American soldiers at home. Now we can just let Joe Stalin and the other dictators fight it out."¹⁴⁷

The ideological issue was thus exploited to the fullest by isolationist spokesmen. They thrust it to the forefront in almost every instance and depicted the threat of communism as one more deadly than that faced in nazism. Congressman Hamilton Fish, always in the vanguard of the movement, made both points with no little vehemence in a radio speech on June 30. He argued that, while he despised nazism, "there is one thing worse and that is the bloody hand of communism." He sarcastically derided the all-out interventionists in the Cabinet—Stimson, Knox, Ickes, and Wickard: "Now these fire-eaters propose to turn the lend-lease bill into a Lenin-Lease bill and send our money and defense articles to Soviet Russia in the name of the four freedoms. What a travesty! Oh, Democracy, what crimes are committed in thy name!"

Then, to put ideological and moral issues in clearer focus, and with a clear look toward the hustings, Fish asked: "I wonder where the great Catholic Church will stand when the issue becomes clear? I wonder whether it will want to help build up communism, world revolution, and atheism, not only in Russia but throughout the whole world."¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ *New York Times*, June 24, 1941, p. 7.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, June 23, 1941, p. 9.

¹⁴⁸ The text of the Fish speech is in the *Congressional Record*, LXXXVII, A3187-89.

Senator Nye, whose reputation as an extreme isolationist was certainly well-founded, struck the identic ideological note in addressing the National Education Association convention in Boston: "The interventionists, after months of preaching of democracy and the four freedoms for all the world in our time and generation, are plainly much embarrassed to find Joe Stalin and his Commies in their camp and qualified for their lend-lease aid. . . ."¹⁴⁹

Not only did they drive home the ideological issue, Fish and Nye also rather proceeded on the assumption that Russia would get American aid and get it under the terms of lend-lease. Certainly Stimson and Knox were not thinking in these terms at the time, contrary to Congressman Fish, though their views were conditioned by other factors. Evidently, the isolationists were seeking to anticipate the issue, endeavoring to arouse public sentiment so strongly against it that the administration would be fearful of taking such a step.

On the floor of Congress, much the same line of argument was followed by the more extreme isolationists. Congressman Frederick C. Smith (R., Ohio) told the House on June 26 that he rejoiced in having a clear conscience because of voting against the Lend-Lease Act. One of his reasons for so doing, he said, "was that the bill made aid possible to Russia and I feared the administration might desire to help Russia."¹⁵⁰ Later in the week he told his colleagues that the President was clearly already giving the Soviets lend-lease aid and, in so doing, "is forcing our nation to defend communism and everything this hellish cult has done since it started," and he declared "we cannot bless communism in Russia and at the same time curse it in America." Aid to Russia, he warned, was aid to the forces of communism in America.¹⁵¹

The "dog-eat-dog" thesis was also a frequent point of reference in the remarks made in Congress by isolationists. Robert F. Rich (R., Pa.) said to the House "let them fight it out."¹⁵² Others were impressed with how the new conflict vindicated the thesis that the European conflict was another duel of power politics, and they were prone to use Finland as the point of departure there. Representative Fred Bradley (R., Mich.) asked, after some sarcastic references to "aid to the democracies" if "we now regard honest, debt-paying Finland as our enemy?"¹⁵³ Representative Mundt (R., S.D.) spoke of the "queer new alliances," referring to

¹⁴⁹ Nye's address is in NEA, *Proceedings* . . . , 1941, pp. 85-92.

¹⁵⁰ *Congressional Record*, LXXXVII, A3103.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 5669, 5759.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 5461.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. A3207.

Finland's participation on Germany's side, and decried the bankruptcy of the interventionist plea to "stop Hitler."¹⁵⁴

Probably the most interesting of the isolationist reactions was to see in the war in Russia a basis for a negotiated settlement to end the war. It was their appeal for realism, but one based largely on ideological evidence. Basically, it was an outgrowth of the relatively greater danger which many of the isolationists saw in communism. Significantly the case was first stated at length by Senator Robert Taft, one of the leading Republicans and a symbol of conservatism.

On June 25 Senator Taft delivered a radio address on the subject "Russia and the Four Freedoms."¹⁵⁵ He began by reiterating the standard isolationist argument that the war made it more necessary than ever that the U.S. keep out of the European conflict. He charged that interventionists had based their case on "emotional and moral grounds" and that the Russo-German war had made crystal clear the "absurdity" of the allegation that the struggle against Hitler was a war of democracy against totalitarianism. How, then, he asked, could the President of the United States ask the American people to support a policy of aiding the Soviet Union?

In the name of democracy we are to make a communist alliance with the most ruthless dictator in the world. Could there be a greater travesty on the false propaganda fed to the American people that this is a great moral issue between ideologies? If Hitler wins it is a victory for fascism. If Stalin wins it is a victory for communism. From the point of view of ideology there is no choice.

But the victory of communism in the world would be far more dangerous to the United States than the victory of fascism. There has never been the slightest danger that the people of this country would ever embrace bundism or nazism. . . . But communism masquerades, often successfully, under the guise of democracy, though just as alien to our real principles as nazism itself. It is a greater danger to the United States because it is a false philosophy which appeals to many. Fascism is a false philosophy which appeals to very few indeed.

Having weighed the relative dangers to the U.S., and finding them largely internal rather than external, and communism a greater peril than nazism, Senator Taft then turned to look at the chances for peace.

And yet the Russo-German war may perhaps be the solution of the present problems of the world. It might actually lead to peace. It seems to indicate that Hitler has given up the idea that he can conquer the British Isles by

154. *Ibid.*, p. A3157.

155. *Ibid.*, pp. A3077-78.

invasion. It seems to show that he believes the future of Germany rests on the Continent of Europe rather than on the seas. I sincerely hope that it may lead to some discussion of peace before the end of 1941.

The Senator admitted that there was no assurance that Britain and Germany could agree on terms, and he made no mention of the effects of the fall of Russia—which he apparently assumed—on the possible conditions of the peace. He urged that President Roosevelt “explore the possibilities of such a peace” and do nothing to impede its realization. He warned that the American people were agreed upon the program of aid to Britain but also upon American noninvolvement in the war. He reiterated his opposition to the Lend-Lease Act on the ground that it conferred “dictatorial powers on the President, including the power to give away our arms to Russia and every other country in the world.” While scorning the ideological trumpet calls of the interventionists, the Senator ended by portraying the chief threat to the U.S. as an ideological one; at the same time he gave his approval to aid for Britain and criticized the administration for the lag in the defense program.

The first week of the Russia war saw another ranking Republican legislator speak to the possibility of a negotiated peace. This was Representative John M. Vorys of Ohio, member of the Foreign Affairs Committee. Speaking to the Institute for Public Affairs at the University of Virginia, Vorys delivered a message entitled “An American Peace Offensive.” He delivered the usual attacks on both Hitler and Stalin and saw the American interest in preventing either from becoming strong enough to dominate the world. The proper course to implement this objective he believed was to wage a “peace offensive” by encouraging the belligerents to discuss peace aims and terms of settlement.¹⁵⁶

Some isolationists expressed considerable concern over the consequences that would follow the expected German conquest of Russia. Representative Woodruff (R., Mich.) thought that the more damage Hitler and Stalin inflicted upon one another, the better for free men everywhere. On the other hand, with the vast resources of Russia at the disposal of Hitler, he feared that “the civilized world would face a calamity unequalled in the annals of civilization.” What should be done? Woodruff went no further than to remark that the longer Russia resisted the longer Britain and America had to gather strength.¹⁵⁷ Representative Chipfield (R., Ill.) also foresaw that a German victory would “virtually nullify the English blockade.” However, he saw no basis for American intervention. Quite the contrary. He argued that, since a success for

156. *Ibid.*, pp. A3100-1.

157. *Ibid.*, p. A3052.

Germany in Russia would make almost insuperable the odds against an invasion of Europe, why should the U.S. not be content to "force Germany to assume such odds if she tries to invade this hemisphere?"¹⁵⁸

In contrast to these comments of isolationist members of Congress,¹⁵⁹ there were few interventionists who spoke directly on the subject of the Russian war. Nor did they hasten to defend the President's statement that American aid would be made available to the Soviet Union.

Senator Pepper (D., Fla.), who as early as the lend-lease debates had announced that he would welcome Russia's participation in the war against Hitler, was an exception. Indeed, he was willing to go far beyond the announcement of the President. In a radio address on June 28, delivered under the auspices of the Committee to Defend America, the Florida Democrat took direct issue with the isolationists' response to the Russian war. Citing their opposition to selective service and to the Lend-Lease Act, he declared:

Now this group has given their song another name, but it is the same old song. They now cry out against Russia, against communism, against irreligion, against Stalin. They wrap their pretentiously holy robes about them and scorn this Churchill and this Roosevelt who would keep such bad company. . . .

A little bit ago it was the same, but the name they then used was British imperialism, undemocratic England, the roaring British lion.

He counseled that the nation abandon the idea of aid to Britain, or aid to any specific nation, and "swear to stop Hitler from conquering the earth." Anyone willing to assist in that should have American support.¹⁶⁰

Senator Pepper also took the occasion of an address to the National Education Association convention in Boston, on June 29, to answer Senator Taft's suggestion that there was an opportunity for a negotiated peace. Excoriating the Nazi regime, and singling out its anti-religious practices, Pepper dismissed any notion that a settlement could be negotiated with such a government. Those who so believed, he remarked, should be furnished with a "guardian." He charged that the opponents of the administration's policies were merely using the Russian issue as a "red herring" and asked if the appropriations of billions of dollars for rearmament and the conscription of American youth proceeded from fear of Russia or Germany.¹⁶¹

158. *Ibid.*, p. A3026.

159. See the remarks of Congressman Thill (R., Wis.), *ibid.*, pp. A3111-12; Osmer (R., N. J.), *ibid.*, p. 5460; and Dirksen (R., Ill.), *ibid.*, p. 5623. Dirksen was more concerned that support of Russia might lead to a halt in the "crusade against those who would destroy the Government of this country"—the American Communists.

160. *Ibid.*, pp. A3215-17.

161. NEA, *Proceedings . . .*, 1941, pp. 93-95.

The provision of American aid to the Soviet Union was also defended, though on conditional terms, by Congressman Frank Buck (D., Calif.). He forecast grave national dangers if Germany should succeed in conquering all of Russia and advancing to the Bering Straits. Accordingly, he urged an all-out effort to speed up the defense program. "I favor," he went on, "aiding Russia to the extent that such aid does not interfere with our established program of assisting Great Britain and China." He denied that such aid implied approval of the Soviet system. The enemy was Hitler, he stated, and therefore "we must be realists."¹⁶²

On June 28 when the war in Russia was almost a week old, several senators were asked by the press to comment on the question of American aid to the Soviet Union. Down to that time only Senator Pepper had made a definite endorsement of such action. It was significant that, of those queried, he was again the only respondent to give an unconditional affirmative. His colleagues preferred to dwell upon the practical difficulties that stood in the way of such a policy.

Senator Byrd (D., Va.) was unable to see how much could be done to help Russia so long as the nation was not producing quantities of war materials sufficient for its own needs or to fulfil its commitments to Britain. Senator Glass (D., Va.)—who was honorary national chairman of Fight for Freedom—simply replied by asking "where would the money come from" if such aid was to be financed. Senator Mead (D., N.Y.) did not see that much could be done for Russia under the existing lend-lease program. He expressed approval of the President's statements with respect to the Russian war but felt sure that "a new lend-lease bill" would be required before Russia could receive much aid. Senator Adams (D., Colo.) pointed out that the initial \$7 billion appropriation for the lend-lease program represented a reduction in what Britain alone had requested; and, Senator Edwin Johnson (D., Colo.) remarked that if the administration requested additional lend-lease funds it was possible that "some Senator" might offer an amendment which would prohibit the use of any of the funds for Russia. Only Senator Pepper insisted that the President could get any sum of money within reason which he requested and warned that unless the nation was prepared to spend \$5 billion immediately to stop Hitler it would have to spend fifteen or twenty times that amount in the future.¹⁶³

These questions of finance and of insufficient production capacity, not to mention the formidable problems of transport, were serious obstacles to the implementation of an aid to Russia policy. The reticence of the inter-

¹⁶² *Congressional Record*, LXXXVII, A3412.

¹⁶³ *Washington Post*, June 29, 1941, p. 4.

ventionists in the Senate on the matter, however, is indicative of something other than practical obstacles. It is evidence of their fear of the anticipated political liabilities implicit in such a program. If the pattern that emerged in the legislative debates over the Tinkham and Reynolds amendments to the Lend-Lease Act were repeated, the administration could count on the votes of this group to support an aid to Russia program. It could not, however, look to them for initiative or legislative leadership. Senator Harry Truman went so far, on the day following "Barbarossa," as to offer this suggestion to the administration—one rather prophetic of the era of the "cold war" and post-World War II revisionism: "If we see that Germany is winning we ought to help Russia and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany and that way let them kill as many as possible, although I don't want to see Hitler victorious under any circumstances. Neither of them think anything of their pledged word."¹⁶⁴ The Missouri Democrat reflected the fear of German victory and the antipathy of the public toward the Soviet Union, but, even in this novel policy proposal, he seemed to assign priority to the former.

The war in Russia, during its initial phases, found the isolationists greatly heartened by the belief that it would strengthen their case for noninterventionism. It gave them opportunity to turn their guns on the ideological appeal of their opponents—to ridicule the notion that a war for the preservation of democracy and civilization was in progress. Yet, in citing the war in Russia as a part of the proof for their own contentions, they staked their argument largely upon the ground of ideological rivalries. They were not, generally, interested in discussing the consequences of a Russian defeat, though when they did so, few of them were willing to acknowledge that Germany was a menace to American security—any more than they had been before June 22. They were inclined to dwell instead upon the immorality of supporting such a government as that of the Soviet Union, calculating, no doubt, upon the revulsion of American religious groups for the Soviet Union to redound to their advantage. In particular, they obviously sought to mobilize Roman Catholic support.

The leaders of interventionist opinion, both in and out of Congress, were similarly disposed to assign importance to the ideological aspects of the Russian war. Few of them professed to see any point in discussing aid to Russia, partly on practical grounds but partly, also, it seems fair to say, because they were apprehensive of the influence that these ideological

¹⁶⁴ Quoted by Turner Catledge, *New York Times*, June 24, 1941, p. 7.

considerations might have upon the general public. The evidence indicates that the general public was not guided by its hatred for communism to the extent that might have been expected. Hatred for nazism, joined to a fear of German power, were the paramount factors in the situation. Sensitive political questions were stimulated and provoked by the German invasion of the Soviet Union, but the Russo-German war produced few converts among isolationists or interventionists as to the basic issues confronting the nation.

V.

Search for a Policy: Official Reaction to the Russo-German War

FRAMEWORK FOR POLICY DECISION

BEFORE CONSIDERING the development of U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union as it emerged in the first weeks of the Russo-German conflict, it is important to describe briefly the general setting of the foreign policy scene just before that dramatic turn of events.

The spring of 1941 had been another time of hard and heavy tidings for Great Britain and the Allied cause. In the Balkans the Germans had again emerged the victor, forcing the British to re-enact on a smaller scale in Greece the epic of Dunkirk. Crete had then fallen in another demonstration of German power, and the British had been driven from Libya. On the Atlantic, perhaps the most crucial of all theaters of operations, British shipping losses had risen to such staggering proportions that the efficacy of the American aid program seemed in jeopardy unless the U.S. thrust its own naval power into the scales. So dark was the scene that in May even the indomitable British Prime Minister had been unable to avoid a note of despair. He had cabled to the President that the "one decisive counterweight I can see . . . would be if the United States were immediately to range herself with us as a belligerent Power."¹ As always, Japan hovered in the background, keeping the bulk of U.S. naval strength immobilized in the Pacific while Washington labored in vain to reach some agreement that would stabilize the Far East. On June 21, in fact, the Japanese-American negotiations had entered into a new stage, when Secretary Hull gave to the Japanese Ambassador a re-statement of the American position.²

1. Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, p. 285.

2. Donald F. Drummond, *The Passing of American Neutrality* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1955), p. 250.

Overhanging this anxious spring was the fact that the U.S. seemed beset with a crisis of indecision. The ardent interventionists in the Cabinet were persuaded that strenuous steps were demanded if the situation were to be saved, and they pressed for American naval escort of the Atlantic convoys and for an all-out production effort at home. They were urging the President to put their case before the people with candor, to warn that—as Secretary of War Stimson put it—“the effort to avoid the use of force is proving ineffective,”³ and to explain in the most somber tones that active measures were called for.

To the dismay and occasional despair of these vigorous proponents of an all-out effort against Germany—men like Stimson, Knox, Morgenthau, Ickes, and Jackson, who were coming more and more to realize that the U.S. could not much longer stay out of the conflict—the President seemed in something of a torpor. Since the lend-lease victory, he had appeared unwilling to push further. He held back on the convoy issue, he refused to ask for the repeal of the Neutrality Act, he was seemingly content to watch the defense production program drift along at a rate of progress far below the effort required for victory. Henry Morgenthau wrote in his diary after a luncheon with Harry Hopkins on May 14:

I think that both the President and Hopkins are groping as to what to do. They feel that something has to be done but don't know just what. Hopkins said that the President has never said so in so many words, but he thinks the President is loath to get into this war, and he would rather follow public opinion than lead it.⁴

Stimson was similarly convinced and personally deplored this lack of leadership. From April through June he importuned the Chief Executive to grasp the nettle, insisting that if he would lead, the public would follow him.⁵

On the eve of “Barbarossa” the President had in fact reached two important decisions, despite the knowledge that isolationists would assail them with all the strength they could muster. He resolved, first, upon a long step forward into the Atlantic battle—the occupation of Iceland by American forces. On June 22 the First Marine Brigade had moved to Argentia preparatory for embarking on July 1 for Iceland.⁶

Then on June 21 he gave his consent to Stimson and General Marshall to ask Congress to declare a national emergency and thereby extend the

3. Stimson and Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War*, p. 372.

4. Quoted in Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 456.

5. See the account of Stimson's running debate with the President during that spring in Stimson and Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War*, pp. 364ff.

6. Drummond, *The Passing of American Neutrality*, p. 255.

period of military service of the National Guard and the "selectees" inducted under the 1940 military conscription bill. The turbulence of the coming storm was evidenced when even Speaker Rayburn and Majority Leader McCormack raised their voices in protest.⁷

On the morning of June 22, when German forces crossed the Russian frontiers, the Second World War acquired an entirely new dimension. Whatever the outcome of the gigantic combat set in motion that day, it was a development of such proportions that the future course of world affairs was clearly in balance. Coming as it did after a crisis of indecision in Washington, it was clear also that U.S. policy was in the balance, confronted by an event which carried implications that could not be ignored.

POLICY PROPOSALS: THE WAR AND NAVY DEPARTMENTS

The ardent interventionists in the Departments of War and Navy looked upon the dramatic turn of events with a certain ambivalence. In a sense, it was to them a godsend. They proceeded on one fundamental premise, however, which caused them also to see in the Russian war a new crisis of potentially more formidable proportions than anything already faced. This was their foregone conclusion that the Soviet Union was doomed. The military men regarded a German victory as an almost inevitable outcome. As a consequence, they viewed the war as a temporary respite which, for so long as German energies were absorbed in the vast spaces of Russia, afforded the democracies priceless time in which to act. Their concern was not with what should be done with regard to the battle in Russia itself, for, as they conceived the problem, nothing could be done. But each day that the Russians fought gave the U.S. and Britain time to act in other areas—to prepare for the assault upon the West which was sure to follow the victory in Russia. If "Barbarossa" was a blessing then, which was what it was regarded, it was also supremely a time to act with decisive impact.

The *New York Times* reported being told by military experts that a German victory within one month "was considered entirely possible."⁸ The *Washington Post* was told that nothing less than an "act of God" could rescue the Russians from a complete debacle.⁹ These were accurate reflections of the prevailing skepticism among the military circles. A memorandum from the Chief of Staff, G-2, to the War Plans Division of the General Staff, early in July, spoke of Russia as "formidable only because of her size." The memorandum stated: "The most that can be

7. Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, pp. 570-71.

8. June 24, 1941, p. 9.

9. June 27, 1941, p. 1.

expected of her is that she will remain in being in her distant fastnesses after the German onslaught has been spent."¹⁰

British military estimates, sent to Harry Hopkins near the end of the first week of the campaign, thought that the first phases of the German offensive (*i.e.*, the occupation of Moscow and the Ukraine) "might take as little as three, or as long as six weeks, or more." The British report then went on to say:

An attempted invasion of the United Kingdom may be considered to be temporarily postponed. . . . It cannot be overemphasized, however, that this is only temporary. If the German campaign in Russia is a lightning one, say from three to four weeks duration, the regrouping of the German formations in the West might be expected to take from four to six weeks after the conclusion of the campaign in Russia. If the campaign were of longer duration, it might take from six to eight weeks.¹¹

It was only a matter of time.

The premise of a German victory was forcefully demonstrated in the policy proposals sent to the President by his military advisers immediately after the Russian war began. On June 23, Secretary Stimson wrote to the President:

For the past thirty hours I have done little but reflect upon the German-Russian war and its effects upon our immediate policy. To clarify my own views I have spent today in conference with the Chief of Staff and the men in the War Plans Division of the General Staff. I am glad to say that I find substantial unanimity upon the fundamental policy which they think should be followed by us. I am even more relieved that their views coincide so entirely with my own.

First: Here is their estimate of controlling facts:

1. Germany will be thoroughly occupied in beating Russia for a minimum of one month and a possible maximum of three months.
2. During this period Germany must give up or slack up on
 - a. Any invasion of the British Isles.
 - b. Any attempt to attack herself or prevent us from occupying Iceland.
 - c. Her pressure on West Africa, Dakar, and South America.
 - d. Any attempt to envelop the British right flank in Egypt by way of Iraq, Syria, or Persia.
 - e. Probably her pressure in Libya and the Mediterranean.

Second: They were unanimously of the belief that this precious and unforeseen period of respite should be used to push with the utmost vigor our movements in the Atlantic theater of operations. They were unanimously of

10. *Pearl Harbor Hearings*, Pt. 14, p. 1336.

11. Quoted in Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp. 304-5.

the feeling that such pressure on our part was the right way to help Britain, to discourage Germany, and to strengthen our own position of defense against our most imminent danger.

Referring then to his and Marshall's anxieties about becoming involved in major operations in the Atlantic without adequate superiority of forces, Stimson wrote, with an apparent sigh of relief: "By getting into this war with Russia Germany has much relieved our anxiety, provided we act promptly and get the initial dangers over before Germany gets her legs disentangled from the Russian mire. . . ." Continuing in an optimistic vein, Stimson concluded:

Germany's action seems like an almost providential occurrence. By this final demonstration of Nazi ambition and perfidy, the door is opened wide for you to lead directly towards the winning of the battle of the North Atlantic and the protection of our hemisphere in the South Atlantic, while at the same time your leadership is assured of success as fully as any future program can be well made.¹²

Secretary Knox also unburdened his thoughts to the President, in a letter written that same day. His response was the same as that of his colleagues in the War Department. He stated:

I feel very deeply that I ought to say to you that, in my judgment, this provides us with an opportunity to strike and strike effectively at Germany. Hitler has violated his own resolution not to engage in two wars at once on two separate fronts. The best opinion I can get is that it will take anywhere from six weeks to two months for Hitler to clean up on Russia. It seems to me that we must not let that three months go by without striking hard—the sooner the better.¹³

Knox then carried his case to the public a week later. In a fighting speech delivered to the conference of governors at Boston on June 30, he urged in unmistakable terms that the decks be cleared for action. Hitler had presented the U.S. a "God-given chance," he told the state executives, to act with decisive impact. "If, while Hitler is assaulting Stalin," he argued, "we can clear the path across the Atlantic and deliver, in safety, the weapons our factories are now producing, ultimate defeat for Hitler is certain. The time to use our Navy to clear the Atlantic of the German menace is at hand."¹⁴

12. Stimson to President Roosevelt, June 23, 1941 (Roosevelt Library, President's Personal File 20, Henry L. Stimson Folder). Most of the letter is printed in Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp. 303-4.

13. Quoted in Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 538.

14. *New York Times*, July 1, 1941, p. 1.

Admiral Stark, Chief of Naval Operations, went to the President to urge immediate action. In the Admiral's words:

Within forty-eight hours after the Russian situation broke, I went to the President, with the Secretary's approval, and stated on the assumption that the Country'[s] decision is not to let England fall, we should immediately seize the psychological opportunity presented by the Russian-German clash and announce and start escorting immediately, and protecting the Western Atlantic on a large scale; that such a declaration, followed by immediate action on our part, would almost certainly involve us in the war and that I considered every day of delay in our getting into the war as dangerous, and that much more delay might be fatal to Britain's survival.¹⁵

Secretary of the Interior Ickes added his voice to that of those of the military advisers, counseling that the President act at once. Ickes cast his gaze upon the Far East and, in a letter to Roosevelt on June 23, suggested that the time was ripe to halt all oil shipments to Japan. He argued that public opinion would support such a move and that from such an embargo a situation might develop "as would make it not only possible but easy to get into this war in an effective way. And if we should thus indirectly be brought in, we would avoid the criticism that we had gone in as an ally of communistic Russia." He added: "It may be difficult to get into this war the right way, but if we do not do it now, we will be, when our turn comes, without an ally anywhere in the world."¹⁶

From these quarters came advice to the President concerning the utilization of the time gained by the German thrust to the east. The Russian war was seen as a factor opening strategic opportunities for the U.S. in the Atlantic. From this perspective, proceeding on the premise of a disaster for Soviet arms, the military advisers approached the new turn of events.¹⁷

POLICY PROPOSALS: THE STATE DEPARTMENT

The diplomats, perforce, had to take a larger view of the situation. Whatever their opinions as to the strategic risks and opportunities that "Barbarossa" afforded for the U.S., they had also to reckon with the direct issue of policy toward the Soviet Union.

The State Department already had explored the problem and canvassed the alternatives. It had notified the embassies in London, Moscow,

15. Quoted from a letter of Admiral Stark to Captain Charles M. Cooke, Jr., dated July 31, 1941. *Pearl Harbor Hearings*, Pt. 16, p. 2175.

16. Ickes, *Secret Diary*, III, 557-58; and Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 538.

17. The silence with respect to Japan is striking. Within a few days, however, considerable thought was being given to this aspect of the situation in both the War and Navy departments.

and Tokyo, beginning on June 14, that the U.S. looked askance upon Britain's seeming eagerness to enter into a close *rapprochement* with Moscow. Its Division of European Affairs, one day before the German invasion, had formulated a policy with specific reference to the problem of aid to the U.S.S.R. in the event of a Russo-German war. Its recommendations followed closely in the path marked out by the June 14 statement, suggesting merely that the U.S. "relax restrictions on exports to the Soviet Union, permitting it even to have such military supplies as it might need badly and which we could afford to spare." In terms of political strategy, it had urged that the U.S. "adhere steadfastly to the line that the fact that the Soviet Union is fighting Germany does not mean that it is defending, struggling for, or adhering to, the principles in international relations which we are supporting."¹⁸

Secretary of State Hull, in writing of his actions on June 22, indicated that he was prepared to be deflected from the conservative policy line laid down in the June 14 and June 21 statements. He was at home, ill, when the news of the invasion was announced.

Immediately I telephoned the President and then Under-Secretary Welles. To each I said, in effect:

"We must give Russia all aid to the hilt. We have repeatedly said we will give all the help we can to any nation resisting the Axis. There can be no doubt for a moment that Russia comes within that category."

I also telephoned some of my associates in the State Department to emphasize to them the same point of view.¹⁹

On the day following, Hull left Washington, on orders of his physician, for a vacation at White Sulphur Springs. He did not return to his desk until August 4 and for that span of time was removed from the policy deliberations in Washington. From that resort he has said that he "emphasized again and again to my associates that we should take every step to aid the Soviets." He did not believe that Russia would fall within a few weeks, and he saw no objections to the sending of arms to the Soviet Union. He urged both the President and Welles to give Moscow the "most vigorous assurance of all the help we could extend."²⁰

It is interesting that Hull did not speak of any contradiction between these recommendations and the statement of June 14, which he paraphrased at length.²¹ Therein the principle was set forth that relations with Moscow should be guided by a strict regard for a *quid pro quo*.

18. *Foreign Relations, 1941*, I, 766-67.

19. Hull, *Memoirs*, II, 967.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 976, 973.

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 972-73. Hull does not refer to the June 21 memorandum.

In suggesting "all aid to the hilt," Hull seemed prepared to ask of the Russians in return only that they continue to fight.

These remarks would indicate that Hull was prepared to go to considerable lengths in support of Russia, but only so far as military aid was concerned. It is striking that this recommendation should have come from the most cautious of all the President's official advisers, whose indecision during the previous weeks had exceeded even that of Roosevelt. Perhaps Hull had sensed how his more venturesome colleagues in the Cabinet would react, for no one was more loath than he to see the nation involved in hostile incidents in the Atlantic. The avoidance of any drastic steps in that theater may have been the basis for his hopes regarding Russia and his immediate endorsement of military aid. If so, his response was a prophetic one.

Elsewhere in the department a more conservative approach appears to have been the prevailing attitude. Deeply committed to the basic policy of countering the German threat, most of the State Department officials were willing to offer some encouragement to the Russians and to accommodate them to a limited extent if they sought material help from the U.S. But the barriers of resentment and suspicion, erected over a period of long years, were not razed by the first bursts of fire from the German cannonade. Doubtful of Soviet survival, distrustful of Soviet motives, and fearful of acquiring some unwelcome liabilities in the Far East, the general disposition was to act within the limits of the policy recommendations of the European Affairs Division. It was, in fact, within that framework that the department actually initiated the first phase of the Soviet aid program.

Acting Secretary Welles was apparently inclined to think very much in these terms. His remarks to the British Ambassador on the morning of June 22 revealed his own and the prevailing attitude of the department. Welles first expressed to Lord Halifax his hope that Britain would not enter into any formal alliance with the U.S.S.R. For one thing, he remarked, he deemed that a Japanese attack on the Soviet Union would come "sooner or later," and if Britain had entered into such an alliance it would then find itself embroiled in hostilities in the Far East. Then, while basing his argument largely upon the "Japanese angle," the Acting Secretary closely paraphrased the memorandum of the Division of European Affairs in expressing his thoughts further.

I said it seemed to me that the wise policy for both the United States and Great Britain to pursue was a policy of expediency based upon a mere recognition of the fact that both Great Britain and the Soviet Union were

at war with Germany, but that anything more far-reaching than that, unless subsequent developments made us change our mind, would seem to me ill-advised at this stage, particularly until we saw far more clearly than we do now what the Japanese course of policy may be. . . .²²

Later in the day, Welles set to work preparing a statement for public release which would, in his words, give the "point of view" of the U.S. "before other quarters deliberately confused or beclouded the issues" for the American people. Early the following morning he took his draft to the White House for the President's approval before releasing it to the press.²³

THE STATEMENT OF JUNE 23

President Roosevelt was apparently satisfied with the Acting Secretary's draft. He read it with approval, making no alterations save for an insertion at the end of one brief sentence. Thereupon, Welles released the statement to the press that same morning.

This first declaration of the American position vis-à-vis the war in Russia began with the observation that, if any further proof had been needed to demonstrate the true nature of Germany's rulers and the scope of their ambitions, the "treacherous attack" on the Soviet Union provided it. It proved also, said Welles, that pacts and treaties, solemnly entered into by the German government, meant nothing, and that to that government the "very meaning of the word 'honor'" was unknown. The position of the U.S. was then set forth in these terms:

This Government has often stated, and in many of his public statements the President has declared, that the United States maintains that freedom to worship God as their consciences dictate is the great and fundamental right of all peoples. This right has been denied to their peoples by both the Nazi and Soviet Governments. To the people of the United States this and other principles and doctrines of communistic dictatorship are as intolerable and as alien to their own beliefs as are the principles and doctrines of Nazi dictatorship. Neither kind of imposed overlordship can have or will have any support or any sway in the mode of life or system of government of the American people.

But the immediate issue that presents itself to the people of the United States is whether the plan for universal conquest, for the cruel and brutal enslavement of all peoples, and for the ultimate destruction of the remaining free democracies, which Hitler is now desperately trying to carry out, is to be successfully halted and defeated.

22. *Foreign Relations, 1941, IV*, 275.

23. Welles, *Time for Decision*, p. 171.

This is the present issue which faces a realistic America. It is the issue at this moment which most directly involves our own national defense and the security of the New World in which we live.

In the opinion of this Government, consequently, any defense against Hitlerism, any rallying of the forces opposing Hitlerism, from whatever source these forces may spring, will hasten the eventual downfall of the present German leaders, and will therefore redound to the benefit of our own defense and security.

Then came the concluding observation, penciled onto the original draft by the President:

"Hitler's armies are today the chief dangers of the Americas."²⁴

Welles has commented that this statement "struck exactly the same note" as the speech of Prime Minister Churchill on the preceding night, though neither he nor the President had "seen the British text" before releasing their statement.²⁵ This comment calls for examination.

In the first place, while they may not have "seen the text," it is almost inconceivable that neither of them had heard what Churchill had said in his radio speech. In the second place, the "notes" were not altogether identical. Churchill, too, made clear his own antipathy for communism, and the American statement was no less explicit on that score. Churchill had also declared in the most unequivocal terms that Nazi Germany and not Soviet Russia was the enemy against whom Britain waged war and that the campaign in Russia had not altered that fundamental issue. The American statement was likewise explicit in declaring that Germany was the danger faced.

But, unlike Prime Minister Churchill, Welles and Roosevelt had not gone on to declare what their policy toward Russia would be. There was no assertion that the Soviet Union would have all possible aid and assistance from the U.S. In fact, the June 23 statement followed closely in the path of the June 21 memorandum of the Division of European Affairs and the oral statement given by Acting Secretary Welles to Lord Halifax the preceding morning. That is, it was nothing more than a recognition that the Soviet Union was at war with Germany and that Germany was the foremost enemy of the U.S.

A comment of the Polish Ambassador is most interesting in this connection. In talking to various individuals in the Department of State on June 23, he had said that he "sensed a certain apprehension and even

24. *Department of State Bulletin*, IV, 755.

25. Welles, *Time for Decision*, p. 171.

regret that Churchill had not seen fit to attach any strings to Britain's declaration of friendship and support for the Soviets."²⁶

The principal significance of this first declaration of the American attitude would seem to be that it indicates that the President was as yet undecided as to what he would do. His caution had not disappeared overnight. Reluctant, as Hopkins had observed in mid-May, to lead public opinion closer to involvement in the war, he was certainly not prepared immediately to take the plunge that his military advisers urged upon him beginning that same June 23. There were some indications during the ensuing two weeks that he was considering moving in the direction that Stimson, Knox, and Stark had pleaded for. The occupation of Iceland was carried through as arranged and, in a letter to Prime Minister King of Canada on July 1, the President spoke of the likelihood of an "intensified" German effort in the Atlantic if Russia collapsed before the end of the summer and then expressed hope that more might be done in the Atlantic theater of operations.²⁷ He also agreed to the initiation of naval escort duty for U.S. and Icelandic flag shipping on the route to Iceland, "including the shipping of any nationality which may join such convoys."²⁸ But he retreated before the order went into effect. Secretary Knox reported that he had "the devil's own time" in getting the President even to agree to the escort of U.S. and Icelandic flag shipping and when that phase of the operation began in late July the provision for "shipping of any other nationality" had been deleted. Nor would the President consent at that time to the transfer of major units from the Pacific Fleet.²⁹ Probably there was no better measurement of the President's course than the fact that Secretary Stimson, who on June 23 had spoken in a vein of buoyant optimism, had surrendered to the counsels of pessimism by July 2. On that night he made this entry in his diary: Altogether, tonight I feel more up against it than ever before. It is a problem whether this country has it in itself to meet such an emergency. Whether we are really powerful enough and sincere enough and devoted enough to meet the Germans is getting to be more and more of a real problem.³⁰

It is clear that the President, extremely sensitive on the question of convoys, had his eyes fixed upon other areas than the North Atlantic. He was watching the battle on the Russian steppes with profound interest, not

26. Jan Ciechanowski, *Defeat in Victory* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1947), p. 29.

27. F. D. R.: *His Personal Letters, 1928-1945*, edited by Elliott Roosevelt (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1950), II, 1179.

28. See the testimony of Admiral Stark in the *Pearl Harbor Hearings*, Pt. 5, pp. 2294-95.

29. Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 539.

30. Stimson and Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War*, p. 371.

convinced that the pessimistic conclusions of his military advisers were justified. And beyond that, the President also was watching the developments in Tokyo. Rather than commit himself to any definite course of action, he spent the first two weeks of the war in Russia still undecided as to just what should be done, his attention focused in particular upon two closely related problems. He first wanted to see how the Russians would acquit themselves in battle; and second, he wanted to gauge the reaction of the American public to the Russo-German war. Before he reached a point of no return on policy decisions, he was content to watch the developments in each of these areas. Consequently, while he marked time, American policy toward the Russo-German war was conducted essentially within the framework of the proposals of the Department of State.

FIRST ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF THE SOVIET UNION

On June 24 the President held a scheduled press conference during which, inevitably, questions pertaining to policy toward the war in Russia were raised. He was first asked to comment on the statement already issued by Acting Secretary Welles. The President replied that he thought the statement "covers it pretty well." Then he went on to advance to a position more nearly abreast of Churchill's, though stressing practical difficulties:

Of course we are going to give all the aid we possibly can to Russia. We have not yet received any specific list of things, and of course people must realize that when we get a list it will probably be of such a character that you can't just go around to Mr. Garfinckel's and fill the order.

He also pointed out that Britain had priority on American arms production.³¹

A reporter then inquired if any aid sent to the Russians would be under the lend-lease program. "I don't know," was the President's reply, and he then laughed. Thereupon another member of the press corps asked if the defense of the U.S.S.R. were "essential" to the defense of the U.S. The only answer this drew was, "Oh, ask me a different type of question—such as 'how old is Ann?'"³²

Thus, the President had announced a willingness to offer aid, though he refused to discuss the question of lend-lease. He further parried the issue by pointing out the heavy outstanding commitments to Britain

31. *Press Conferences*, MS, Vol. XVII (January-June, 1941). Roosevelt Library, President's Personal File 1-P.

32. *Ibid.*

and by stressing the fact that no official communication had been received from Moscow. All of this was, to be sure, true enough.

On that same day—June 24—the first steps were taken to make possible a limited effort to assist the Russians. It was announced that some \$40 million in Soviet assets, frozen under the Executive Order of June 14, had been released.³³ On the next day it was announced that the President had ruled not to apply the provisions of the Neutrality Act to the Soviet Union, thereby leaving the port of Vladivostok open to American shipping.³⁴

These actions and declarations of the first four days of the Russo-German war served several purposes. First, they followed through on the pledge given to Prime Minister Churchill earlier in the month and at the same time confirmed that the basic American position toward the war in Europe was unchanged. Second, they served to offer encouragement to the Soviet government. They were, at the least, "gestures" of good will, expressing American moral support of Russia's battle but not committing the U.S. to any specific path of action. Third, they were useful trial balloons to test the general reaction of the American public to a policy of support for the Russian war effort, if such a policy should become feasible. Fourth, and very importantly, they were calculated to produce an impression upon Japan.

Even before reaching a definite decision as to how far it was practicable to move in support of the U.S.S.R. the President did take rather extraordinary steps to restrain Japan from any precipitate action against Siberia in concert with the German attack on Russia's western frontiers. This incident pointedly demonstrates the great importance of the "Japanese angle" in the shaping of American foreign policy toward the Russian war. It is relevant to consider it here, before turning directly to the Soviet aid program and Soviet-American negotiations.

It will be recalled that, in talking with Lord Halifax on the morning of June 22, Acting Secretary Welles had stressed his own belief that Japan would "sooner or later" join in the German attack on the Soviet Union and cited this as a reason for Britain's holding aloof from any formal commitment to the U.S.S.R. The chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs held the same estimate of the situation. In a memorandum on the following day, he wrote that "Barbarossa" would likely cause "confusion and debate" in Japan, some factions urging that it be utilized by striking against Britain and the Netherlands East Indies, others favoring that accounts be settled in Siberia. Because Tokyo realized

33. Frank L. Kluckhohn, *New York Times*, June 25, 1941, p. 1.

34. George Bookman, *Washington Post*, June 26, 1941, p. 1.

that a southward push would more likely lead to war with the U.S., the Far Eastern officer thought the Siberian school would more likely carry the day.³⁵ This was certainly the attitude of Foreign Minister Matsuoka, who told the Emperor that Japan should postpone the southward advance and fight the Soviet Union.³⁶

As Ambassador Grew expressed it, Tokyo was indeed in a "quandary." In a series of liaison conferences held between June 25 and July 1 the Japanese government moved in the direction opposite that of Matsuoka, as most of the Cabinet was resentful of German perfidy.³⁷ At an Imperial Conference on July 2 the Japanese government reached the decision to continue its movements in Indochina and Thailand and to remain aloof for a time from the Russian war. However, it was decided that if "the German Soviet War should develop to our advantage, we will make use of our military strength, settle the Soviet question and guarantee the safety of our northern borders."³⁸

The gist of this decision was known to the U.S. through an intercepted circular letter from the Foreign Office in Tokyo. It did little to assuage the anxieties regarding Siberia, however, for there was a definite expectation that the German-Soviet war would develop to Japan's advantage. Even though Japanese forces would have to re-group before an offensive against the Maritime Provinces,³⁹ Washington became convinced during late June and early July that this was a probable development within a matter of weeks, since it was deemed that the Germans would successfully attain their objectives in their offensive.

As early as June 25 the Division of Far Eastern Affairs attempted to define the interest of the U.S. in the instance of a Russo-Japanese conflict. Its assistant chief pointed out that all considerations pointed toward an eventual Japanese move against the Maritime Provinces. He observed that this would certainly reduce the length of Russia's resistance while it was distinctly in the interests of the U.S. for Russia to continue the battle against Germany for as long as possible. Consequently, the memorandum pointed out that although a Japanese thrust against the Maritime Provinces might be a temporary advantage for the U.S. in the Far East, in that it would keep Japan temporarily heavily engaged in the north, it would certainly contravene the long-range American interests in

35. *Foreign Relations, 1941*, IV, 276-77. 36. Feis, *Road to Pearl Harbor*, p. 211.

37. F. C. Jones, *Japan's New Order in East Asia: Its Rise and Fall, 1937-1945* (London: Oxford University Press, for the Royal Institute of International Affairs and the Institute of Pacific Relations, 1954), pp. 217-18. See the June 26 dispatch of Ambassador Grew in *Foreign Relations, 1941*, IV, 986.

38. Quoted in Feis, *Road to Pearl Harbor*, p. 216.

39. See the Naval Intelligence memorandum of July 2, *Pearl Harbor Hearings*, Pt. 20, p. 3993.

the over-all international arena. It was suggested that the U.S. could discourage such a step by Tokyo through giving evidence of American aid and sympathy for the Soviet Union.⁴⁰

This was the crucial factor: the prolongation of Soviet resistance to the German invasion. It explains why, in the words of Prince Konoye, the U.S. "showed a profound interest in Japan's attitude toward the German-Soviet war."⁴¹ The first installment in this demonstration of interest, and of evidence of American support for the U.S.S.R., came in the announcement that the port of Vladivostok would be left open to American shipping and in the other statements made by American officials during that same week.

By early July, Washington was becoming definitely anxious about what Japan might do. From Chungking a report was sent to the White House on July 2 that the Generalissimo had "reliable information" that Japan was preparing to abrogate its neutrality treaty with the U.S.S.R. and to go to war. Tokyo was hopeful, according to this source, that the U.S. would maintain a "neutral attitude" in such an event.⁴² U.S. officials were mightily impressed. The following day Welles told Lord Halifax that, judging from reports, the abrogation of the Soviet-Japanese pact "might be looked for in the near future."⁴³ That same July 3 Acting Secretary Welles gave a solemn warning to Ambassador Oumansky. Alluding to his earlier advance warnings concerning a German invasion, Welles said to the Soviet diplomat, "that I now desired in the same friendly spirit to inform him that this Government had reports which it believed equally authentic that the Government of Japan had now decided to abrogate the neutrality pact with the Soviet Union in the near future and thereafter to declare war on Russia."⁴⁴

The Navy took a view of the situation which was identical with that of the State Department. It sent to the Naval Attaché in London, also on July 3, a dispatch stating that Japan had reached a basic policy decision likely to mean war. The dispatch said that a move against Britain and the Dutch could not be ruled out, but action in the south would be more likely confined to Indochina and that Japan would proceed to abrogate the treaty with Russia and direct a "major military effort" against the Maritime Provinces. It was anticipated that the attack might come near the end of July, although it might be "deferred until after the collapse of European Russia."⁴⁵

40. *Foreign Relations, 1941*, IV, 278-80.

41. "Memoirs of Prince Konoye," in *Pearl Harbor Hearings*, Pt. 20, p. 3993.

42. *Foreign Relations, 1941*, IV, 289.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 290.

44. Memorandum of conversation, Welles and Oumansky, July 3, 1941 (861.24/558½).

45. *Foreign Relations, 1941*, IV, 298-99.

The following day it was decided that the situation called for unusual diplomatic steps. President Roosevelt sent a message directly to the Japanese Premier, Prince Konoye, referring to reports reaching the U.S. that Japan intended to undertake hostilities against the U.S.S.R. The message concluded: "It is the earnest hope of the Government of the United States that the reports . . . are not based upon fact, and an assurance to that effect from His Excellency the Prime Minister of Japan would be deeply appreciated by the Government of the United States."⁴⁶

As Konoye later wrote, the "procedure was unprecedented," and Grew was unable to deliver it directly and by-pass the deeply distrusted Matsuoka. The Foreign Minister answered on July 8 that Japan's assurance to Soviet Ambassador Smetanin, given on July 2, that Japan intended to observe the pact of neutrality should suffice as a reply to the query from Washington. He then rather mockingly turned the tables by asking the American government if it intended to "intervene in the European war," as reports reaching Tokyo seemed to indicate.⁴⁷

The diplomatic sparring was not ended, but for the present there seemed nothing further to do. Washington pondered what action it should take if and when Japan did intervene in the Russian war but could find no ready answer.⁴⁸ It suffices here to point out that the "Japanese angle" was a factor of leading significance in the formulation of American policy toward Soviet Russia and in the decisions taken to support the Soviet effort against Germany. Each of the "gestures" made in Moscow's direction during the closing days of June was undoubtedly made partially for the purpose of edifying Tokyo—if, indeed, that was not their major intent. It is noteworthy that Japan was impressed. Prince Konoye, as early as July 4, recommended to Matsuoka a "readjustment of diplomatic relations" with the U.S. on the ground, *inter alia*, that such a readjustment was necessary to prevent a Soviet-American *rapprochement*.⁴⁹

46. *Foreign Relations of the United States, Japan: 1931-1941* (Department of State Publication 2016, Washington: 1943), II, 502-3.

47. *Ibid.*, pp. 503-4; Joseph C. Grew, *Ten Years in Japan* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1944), pp. 399-400; and the "Memoirs of Prince Konoye," *Pearl Harbor Hearings*, Pt. 20, p. 3993.

48. See the record of the conversation between Welles and Halifax on July 10, during which the British Ambassador made inquiries along this line. Welles would only say that the United States would institute embargoes, but beyond that he would make no comment of a specific nature. *Foreign Relations, 1941*, IV, 300-2.

49. "Memoirs of Prince Konoye," *Pearl Harbor Hearings*, Pt. 20, p. 3994.

VI.

American Policy Takes Form: Decisions and Conflicts on Aid for Russia

AS THE PRESIDENT reflected upon what decisions could and should be made to meet the new situation created by the German-Soviet war, the Department of State set to work initiating a limited program of economic aid for the Soviet Union. Its frame of reference was the policy memorandum of June 21 and the statements authorized by the White House during the opening days of the Russo-German conflict. Until the President intervened for a broader commitment, these were the bases for negotiation and action.

THE STATE DEPARTMENT INITIATES AN AID PROGRAM

Moscow Asks for American Assistance

On the evening of June 26 Ambassador Oumansky called on Acting Secretary of State Welles to inform him officially of the German invasion of his country and to sound out the American response to that event. He found Welles in a sympathetic frame of mind. Welles expressed the regret of the U.S. that the Soviet Union found itself in such straits and referred the Russian Ambassador to the statement of June 23, the President's comment at his press conference on June 24, and to the release of Soviet funds and the nonapplication of the Neutrality Act as evidences of the American attitude. Even the contentious Oumansky was moved to express his gratification and to say that it was unfortunate that no more progress had been achieved in the conversations he and Welles had carried on for so many months. Welles responded to the occasion by suggesting that the past be forgotten and attention focused on current problems. Oumansky said that, as yet, he had received no instructions from his government concerning a request for aid, but Welles went on to mention the possibility

that the U.S. might provide technicians and engineers if they were needed and urged that the military attachés and press correspondents be permitted by the Soviet government to visit the front in order to see first-hand what might be done.¹

The following morning Welles notified Ambassador Steinhardt in Moscow of the steps that were being taken, informing him that, in accordance with the policy announced by the President, a Soviet request for assistance would receive prompt attention and "as favorable consideration as possible."² By that time—June 27—the department was, in fact, in the process of establishing a special organization to deal with the anticipated Soviet requests.

In Washington on that same day, the Russians continued their explorations as they awaited definite instructions from the Kremlin on the submission of a formal aid request. Representatives of Amtorg, the Soviet trading corporation in the U.S., called on General Maxwell, the Administrator of Export Control, to submit lists of articles for which it had previously placed orders and applied for export permits. Later Oumansky, accompanied by Andrei Gromyko, Counselor to the Soviet Embassy, called at the State Department on Assistant Secretary Acheson. There they also left the lists of articles desired for export, taking the opportunity to say to Acheson that the discussion of shipping priorities and of the processing of export license applications at General Maxwell's office had left the Amtorg representatives "discouraged." They expressed the hope that a central organization of some description could be established through which both Amtorg and the Embassy might conduct purchasing operations. Acheson told them that such an organization had already been ordered created in the form of a special inter-agency committee, that its chairman would be Charles Curtis, Jr., the Special Assistant to the Under-Secretary of State. With that committee, or with his office, Acheson informed the Russians, applications should be filed. Requests concerning military items, he pointed out, would have to go to the President or such military authorities as he designated and should therefore be filed through Welles's office.³

As a result of these exploratory discussions in Washington, the Soviet government could feel confident that a request for U.S. assistance on its part would meet with a sympathetic response. On the afternoon of June 29 Foreign Minister Molotov summoned Ambassador Steinhardt to the Kremlin for a discussion of these matters. He told Steinhardt that Oumansky had been first instructed "not to raise the question of aid but to inquire as to the attitude of the United States" regarding the German inva-

1. *Foreign Relations*, 1941, I, 769-72.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 773-74.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 772-73.

sion, whereupon Steinhardt recapitulated the statements of the American position and remarked that the U.S. was willing to offer aid if it were asked to do so. To this Molotov replied that the American attitude was "understood and appreciated" and that Oumansky had been instructed to present such a request, although he went on to express some skepticism as to the scope of any assistance that might be given.⁴

So it was that on June 30 Ambassador Oumansky called on the Acting Secretary of State to present officially the first aid request. He told Welles that his government "had been deeply satisfied with the statements made to the Ambassador here and had consequently authorized him to present, as he now did, a general statement of the immediate requirements of the Soviet Government." The statement presented was a memorandum listing nine points that covered in a general way the Soviet needs. Welles gave assurances that the list would receive prompt attention, but he urged that as soon as possible it be broken down into a detailed statement in order to facilitate thorough review. As for the list of materials already given to Acheson's office, covering articles requested by the Soviet purchasing agency before the outbreak of the war with Germany, Welles remarked that some of the items of the list were being given "favorable consideration."⁵

Oumansky replied that the general statement of requirements would be carefully itemized at once, and he added that he had instructed Amtorg representatives to remain in Washington and to be placed at the disposal of U.S. officials so that whatever information was needed could be made immediately available. Referring to the special machinery being established to handle the Soviet aid requests, Oumansky told Welles that he had spent some two hours the preceding day in discussing with Curtis the organization and procedures that were to be followed, and he expressed his "great appreciation" for these steps.⁶

It was immediately evident that the Russians had placed before the U.S. a projected undertaking of vast proportions. Pursuant to Welles's suggestion, the list was broken down into greater detail by the Russians during the week that followed. As finally processed by the special committee on Soviet aid for presentation to the President and Cabinet on July 18, the aid requested reached the staggering sum of \$1,836,507,823. The categories submitted by the Russians as most urgent were aircraft—three thousand bombers and three thousand pursuit planes, anti-aircraft guns, toluol, and aviation gasoline and lubricants. In these categories alone the dollar value of the articles sought was \$1,756,500,000. The balance of the list was com-

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 774-75.

6. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 779-81.

prised of requests for raw materials, for machinery, and for industrial plants.⁷ In more than one respect, it was an impressive document.

The Curtis Committee

Before describing the initial action taken upon the statement of Soviet requirements, it will be useful to describe the organization of the special committee created to deal with Soviet supply during this opening phase of the program. It is noteworthy that a special organization was already in preparation by the time Oumansky first called on Welles after the start of the German invasion on the evening of the twenty-sixth. The promptness with which the committee was created seems to indicate some impetus from the attitudes of Secretary Hull and the President. Certainly it was an eminently logical arrangement in view of the ramified regulation of export trade that had been developing through 1940 and 1941. In March of 1941 the State Department Division of Commercial Treaties and Agreements had been given the responsibility of "coordinating the activities of the Department in assisting foreign governments, and purchasers sponsored by foreign governments, to purchase and export from the United States such articles as the public interest may permit or require." This naturally included the purchasing operations of the Russians, as well as all other states that were affected by the order of June 14 and were ineligible for general export licenses. Effective April 1, Charles P. Curtis, Jr., was named Special Assistant to the Under-Secretary of State to "assist in the correlation of international political and economic policies of the United States with the defense policies of the United States" in regard to the problem of foreign purchasing operations and export applications.⁸

It was natural that the task of putting into operation an inter-agency committee to deal with Soviet aid requests should be given to Curtis, who also served as chairman of the committee.

As formalized in a statement given to Welles and Acheson on June 30, the special committee included representatives from the Department of State, the Division of Defense Aid Reports (the lend-lease agency), the Office of the Administrator of Export Control, the Office of Price Administration and Civilian Supply, the Office of Production Management, the Army-Navy Munitions Board, and, on occasion, the Maritime Commission.⁹

7. Memorandum, Curtis to Welles, "Soviet Requirements," July 18, 1941 (861.24/517 3/4).

8. *Department of State Bulletin*, IV, 480. Quotations are from Departmental Order No. 935, dated April 16, 1941. Also I have used a summary memorandum on the "Russian Situation," Philip Young to Harry Hopkins, July 10, 1941 (OLLA, Russia File).

9. Memorandum, Curtis to Welles and Acheson, "Organization and Policy for Export and Production of Articles for Russia," June 30, 1941 (861.24/516 1/2).

In terms of procedures and policies, it is important to note that the committee's jurisdiction did not extend to military items. These were the concern of the Division of Defense Aid Reports, the Joint Aircraft Committee, and other joint Anglo-American committees in the War Department formed to handle military lend-lease. All other aid requests, however, were funneled through this channel. As defined by the chairman, the basic policy assumption of the committee was that the Soviet Union was "fighting against the same aggression against which we are helping other countries to fight and against which we are ourselves preparing." Therefore, he submitted: "Wherever it is possible without immediate and grave prejudice to our own defense or economy or our aid to those other countries, Russia should be permitted to maintain and fortify her internal economy by purchases in this country."¹⁰

With reference to Soviet orders already placed in the U.S., the Curtis memorandum set forth these policy guidelines: First, in the instance of raw materials already ordered and awaiting the issuance of export licenses upon applications pending or ready to be filed, the licenses were to be issued. Second, in the case of requests for manufactured articles already finished or to be finished in the immediate future, export licenses were to be approved unless the articles were urgently needed for U.S. defense or by another nation resisting armed attack. Third, requests for articles still in production were to be granted unless the additional production would consume capacities urgently needed for the defense of the U.S. or a nation resisting armed attack; or, unless the articles themselves, when finished, would not promote such defense because of not meeting standard specifications.

In the instance of new Soviet orders, the memorandum gave the same criteria for review—priority was assigned not only to urgent needs of U.S. defense but also to the needs of other nations receiving American assistance. Also, account was to be taken of the increased time during which production facilities would be in use and the increased uncertainties with respect to conditions existing at time of delivery. Finally, in the case of requests for the purchase and export of such standard strategic or critical commodities as petroleum, consideration was to be given to existing or anticipated shortages in the U.S. In all circumstances, the availability of shipping was to be considered.

This special committee held five meetings, the last one on July 16. As a result of its deliberations and inquiries, Welles presented to the President and the Cabinet on July 18 a group of recommendations sug-

10. *Ibid.*

gesting that immediate shipment be cleared on items totaling \$15,680,000 and that over the next twelve months approval be given on additional requests totaling \$172,119,000.¹¹ This left for further consideration a balance of \$1,648,708,116, which consisted chiefly of military items that lay outside the committee's jurisdiction. These were only the recommendations of a group acting in the nature of a clearing house, not the policy decisions of operating agencies. As a result of the committee's activities, export licenses were actually issued on articles totaling in value \$9 million.¹²

The Russians Seek Political Agreements

Acting Secretary Welles and other American officials were impressed by the character of the Soviet aid requests submitted in late June and early July. In asking for rolling mills, cracking plants for aviation gasoline, and similar items, the Russians gave testimony to the determination with which they were resisting the German attack. Fears in Washington of an early Soviet surrender were therefore somewhat relieved.¹³ Moreover, when Premier Stalin went before his people on July 2, to make his first public statement on the war, his remarks made a "good impression" on Washington officials. His call for a "scorched earth" policy and resistance to the bitter end, and his rather candid review of the extent of the German advance, indicated that his government had greater political resilience than had been anticipated.¹⁴

Finding a sympathetic response to his search for materials in the U.S., Ambassador Oumansky even went so far as to strike, for a time, an amiable pose. Following a session with the Soviet representative on July 3, Welles noted that "for the first time in my long series of conversations with the Ambassador he expressed complete satisfaction with everything being done and the deepest appreciation" for the action being taken on export licenses.¹⁵ Hitler had wrought some remarkable manifestations of cordiality. But if it seemed that an oasis had been planted in the desert, the desert itself was by no means obliterated. Soviet expressions of satisfaction with the aid effort were soon to be supplemented by complaints, and beyond the confines of questions pertaining to material aid

11. Memorandum, Curtis to Welles, "Soviet Requirements," July 18, 1941 (861.24/517 3/4).

12. On the activities of the committee, see Fennemore, *The Role of the Department of State in Connection with the Lend-Lease Program*, MS, pp. 151ff; also, I have used an undated document entitled "Lend-Lease Liaison with Foreign Nations—Russia," in the Foreign Economic Administration-OLLA Weekly Reports File, Box 3216.

13. See Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 545.

14. Ernest Lindley, *Washington Post*, July 6, 1941, Sec. II, p. 6.

15. Memorandum of conversation, Welles and Oumansky, July 3, 1941 (861.24/558½).

American officials saw no transformation occurring in the methods or aims of Soviet diplomacy. Specifically, events on the diplomatic front during July gave evidence that the Soviets were seeking as diligently as ever the extension and consolidation of their position in Eastern Europe.

Officials in the Department of State viewed with some concern the nature of the negotiations in London between the U.S.S.R. and the Polish government-in-exile. The Polish Premier, General Sikorski, had gone so far on June 23 as to deliver a very optimistic radio address in which he said Poland could assume that the Russians would cancel the 1939 agreement with Germany and restore the Soviet-Polish boundaries to the pre-war *status quo*. Many Polish officials deplored the remarks, among them the Polish Ambassador to the United States—Jan Ciechanowski. Their fears seemed confirmed by the fact that not until July 4 did the Soviet Ambassador in London consent to take up with Foreign Minister Eden the question of Soviet-Polish relations. When he did so, it was to announce Moscow's consent to the creation of a Polish national army in the Soviet Union and to express sympathy for the establishment of a free and independent Poland, but on the subject of boundaries he was distinctly noncommittal.¹⁶ Moreover, it was a fact that the Soviet government had not responded in like manner to Prime Minister Churchill's overtures of June 22. *Pravda* printed parts of his speech, but from the highest levels there was only what Churchill terms "oppressive silence." When Stalin sent a personal reply, on July 18, it was to ask for a second front, while in Moscow British Ambassador Cripps found the Kremlin interested in going far beyond the proposed agreement for mutual aid and a mutual pledge to make no separate peace. An accord of this nature was signed in Moscow on July 12, but the Russians were interested in reaching broader political agreements.¹⁷ On political matters, London held off, influenced in part no doubt by American sensibilities.

In Washington the Polish negotiations stimulated a resurgence of apprehension that the British might be persuaded to agree to a political accord with Moscow and to encourage the Polish government-in-exile to do the same. Such actions, it was feared, could easily lead to some unsavory arguments among the "allies" and perhaps to some unfortunate evidences of power politics. Welles was probably thinking of Halifax's "cynicism" toward the Baltic states, for example, as well as the Japanese problem, when he urged upon the Ambassador on June 22 that Britain eschew any formal alliance with Russia and proceed on a basis of "expedi-

16. Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, pp. 552-53.

17. Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin*, pp. 7-8; and Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, pp. 381-83.

ency."¹⁸ The sense of "regret" that Polish Ambassador Ciechanowski thought he detected in discussing Churchill's unconditional promise of aid to Russia with officials in the State Department—a feeling he thought was "implied" in remarks made to him by Welles himself on June 26¹⁹—would seem not to have stemmed so much from the fact that Churchill's approach had been "unconditional." It proceeded, more likely, from the misgivings extending back to mid-June, when the Prime Minister had entered into discussions with Soviet Ambassador Maisky, that Britain might be moved to pay a political price for Soviet military collaboration.

Certainly Welles was faced with no dearth of advice from several sources that the U.S. attach conditions to any aid it furnished the Russians. On June 24 the Estonian Consul-General in New York wrote to him asking that the U.S. take the opportunity to request the Soviet Union to evacuate Estonia and release all political exiles.²⁰ On the following day Hamilton Fish Armstrong, of the Council on Foreign Relations, wrote to Welles with reference to unconfirmed reports circulating that Moscow had agreed to restore to Poland all territory seized in 1939. He suggested to the Secretary that the U.S. would be wise to convince the Kremlin of the soundness of such a move. A "Russian commitment now might be comparatively easy to obtain," Armstrong advised, while in the future it might be quite difficult. He deemed the U.S. in a good position to make such a proposal and thought it would have a salutary effect on all of Europe. "Above all," he wrote, "it would provide a moral sugar-coating for the pill which Americans must swallow if our government is to aid Soviet Russia."²¹

Then the Polish Ambassador made some direct overtures in Washington in this respect, asking support for his country in its negotiations with Moscow. On June 26, Ciechanowski asked Welles if the President could take up Poland's cause at such time as he was prepared to define the U.S. position vis-à-vis the U.S.S.R. Welles replied that he believed the President would act on Poland's behalf when the time was ripe, suggesting this might be whenever the Russians applied for aid. After the Poles and Russians had entered into direct negotiations in London on July 5 and Soviet diplomat Maisky had given notice that Moscow was by no means prepared to embrace the pre-war boundary, Ciechanowski again approached Welles. He asked on July 8 if the U.S. would convey to Mos-

18. *Foreign Relations, 1941*, IV, 275; and memorandum of conversation, Welles and Halifax, June 15, 1941 (740.0011 EW1939/12571).

19. Ciechanowski, *Defeat in Victory*, p. 30.

20. Letter of Welles to Kaiv (Estonian Consul-General), July 14, 1941 (8601.00/467).

21. Quoted in Ciechanowski, *Defeat in Victory*, p. 30.

cow its earnest desire that an agreement be reached on the basis of the Polish proposals, reminding Welles of his remarks made late in June.²²

If at any point the American officials were tempted to seek concessions from the Kremlin as the price for material help, some informal advances made by the Russians in Washington, as the Polish-Soviet conversations were going on in London, must have seemed to emphasize the hazards involved in such a course. The Russians undertook a diplomatic offensive of their own, eager to obtain concessions from the Americans. One may debate who was in the better position to demand concessions from the other, but it is understandable that officials in Washington were disconcerted by any prospect of discussing political terms for Soviet military cooperation.

The Soviet attitude regarding its position in Eastern Europe clearly emerged on the evening of July 1. On that occasion Ambassador Oumansky, accompanied by the First Secretary of the Embassy, invited Loy Henderson, Assistant Chief of the Division of European Affairs, to dinner at a restaurant a few miles from Washington. Oumansky brought up the subject of U.S.-Soviet relations and had soon reverted to the question of the Baltic ships. Henderson said he had hoped the matter would not be raised, but Oumansky pressed on, remarking that he thought the matter could be easily settled and that he saw no reason why it should create difficulties. Henderson has recounted the following exchange:

I replied that the recognition of any Soviet interest in the Baltic ships would necessarily imply recognition of Soviet conquests in Eastern Europe, particularly in the Baltic. The Ambassador said that was precisely what the Soviet Government wanted. The Soviet Government expected the American Government to recognize the former Baltic States as an integral part of the territory of the Soviet Union. I again pointed out to the Ambassador the futility of the renewal of discussions on this point.

But Oumansky continued to argue that there were no "principles" involved, that the situation was the same as the recent British conquest of Syria, and he then began to speak of the political leaders of the Baltic states in quite unsavory terms. Henderson insisted that the matter be dropped. Returning home, when Oumansky said that he hoped the Soviet Embassy and the State Department would come to have greater mutual confidence, Henderson concurred but suggested that following the regular channels of communication would facilitate this.²³ Plainly, it had not been a pleasant evening.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30; and Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 553.

23. *Foreign Relations, 1941*, I, 781-86.

State Department Reactions

The Polish-Soviet discussions, the Anglo-Soviet "alliance" of July 12, Oumansky's importunities regarding the Baltic states, the disturbing spectacle of Finland's participation in the attack on Russia, all combined to fill the State Department with serious apprehensions during July. Some officials believed the Russians were seeking to stake out a sphere of influence extending from Finland to Yugoslavia, including Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Bulgaria, and even Hungary. Assistant Secretary A. A. Berle thought the whole matter "damned dangerous."²⁴

Both Berle and Henderson reflected the deep suspicions of Soviet intentions. On July 10 Berle wrote to F.B.I. chief J. Edgar Hoover that he believed Soviet friendliness was produced purely by "considerations of expediency" and that it might change abruptly. Though it was "not likely," he would not exclude the possibility of a new Soviet deal with Germany. In any event, he expressed the hope that the entire Communist apparatus in the U.S. and the Western Hemisphere would be kept under close surveillance.²⁵

Welles apparently shared in these apprehensions, but he made no move to act on the suggestions that conditions be attached to any assistance given the Russians. To the Estonian request that Washington intervene on its behalf, Welles replied in mid-July that the U.S. had the "deepest sympathy" with Estonia's plight but saw no "useful purpose" in asking Russia to evacuate the Baltic republic.²⁶ To Polish Ambassador Ciechanowski he said that, since the U.S.S.R. had not requested lend-lease aid but had asked instead to purchase materials here, the U.S. could not appropriately advance Poland's claims as a condition for help.²⁷ Further, he said that the U.S. would confine its opinions to rather general terms and not get involved in the details of the Polish-Soviet negotiations. The U.S. also tried to keep itself disentangled from the delicate problems pertaining to Finland's participation in the war, though Minister Schoenfeld was told to make it clear to Finnish officials that the U.S. considered Finland as embarking upon an ill-conceived venture by throwing in with Hitler. However, the Finnish minister in Washington gave assurances that Finland was taking defensive steps only and not acting as an ally of Germany, so as long as the Finns remained short of the re-conquest of their former frontiers the question could remain rather in the background.²⁸

24. Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 557.

25. *Foreign Relations*, 1941, I, 789-90.

26. Letter of Welles to Estonian Consul-General, July 14, 1941.

27. Ciechanowski, *Defeat in Victory*, p. 30.

28. Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, pp. 549ff.

Actually, top-ranking American officials were alarmed by the very fact of any discussions of frontiers, boundaries, or other political bargains. Their attitude in the summer of 1941, and thereafter, was that these matters should be assiduously avoided during the course of hostilities and reserved for settlement at the peace table. An indication of this is in the fact that, while the Russians had not asked for lend-lease aid, as Welles told Ciechanowski, they had certainly asked for sizable credits and loans—a point to be discussed hereafter. It was not that the U.S. had no opportunity to seek advance agreements. It did not want to press them, for various reasons. The President, no doubt, harbored fears that Russia might conclude a separate peace, but the matter went deeper than that. It was a part of the entire fabric of wartime diplomacy.

The apprehensions over boundary “deals” in Eastern Europe were articulated in more circumspect ways. Fearful that Britain might be persuaded to urge the Poles to make some territorial concessions to the U.S.S.R. in mid-July, Acting Secretary Welles prevailed upon President Roosevelt to send a message on the general subject to Prime Minister Churchill. In his cable, the President began by saying the matter of boundaries was as yet “not serious,” but he expressed the fear that agreements entered into at that stage might “cause unpleasant repercussions later on.” He suggested that the U.S. and Britain not commit themselves to any such arrangements “for the very good reason that both Britain and the United States want assurance of future peace by disarming all troublemakers and secondly by considering the possibility of reviving small states in the interests of harmony even if this has to be accomplished through plebiscite methods.” He also referred to the sensitivities of different national groups in America and concluded on this note:

I am inclined to think that an over-all statement on your part would be useful at this time, making it clear that no postwar peace commitments as to territories, population or economics have been given. I could then back up your statement in very strong terms. There is no hurry about this, but you might think it over.²⁹

Churchill never replied to this, but it is a fact that London urged the Poles not to press the matter of boundaries. The problem was therefore shelved and the Polish-Soviet Pact of July 30 went no further than declaring invalid the Nazi-Soviet treaties of 1939. Acting Secretary Welles could, therefore, inform the press on July 31 that the agreement was con-

29. Letter, President Roosevelt to Prime Minister Churchill, July 14, 1941 (740.0011 EW1939/13132b). Also quoted in Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 555.

sidered consistent with U.S. policy in that it did not recognize changes wrought by military conquest.³⁰

In the Department of State misgivings over the Eastern European scene led to a consideration of plans to reorganize the advisory committee on postwar foreign policy in order to expedite the study of desirable postwar settlements. State Department members of the group met on August 1 and recommended that: (1) the U.S. suggest to Britain that it abstain from commitments on the peace settlement; (2) the U.S. and Britain make arrangements for discussions of a common program toward nationality and economic problems; (3) the U.S. refrain from severing relations with Finland for the time being; and (4) support be given to the independence of Finland, the Baltic states, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia, and boundary questions be left for future settlement.³¹

It is relevant here to observe that problems of Eastern Europe were not the exclusive cause of diplomatic friction between the American officials and the U.S.S.R. during that July. By the latter part of the month the Russian Ambassador had resumed his former habit of complaining, in vehement terms, of the inadequacies of American exports. As will be pointed out later on, he was also unhappy over the matter of finance. American officials, for their part, were thoroughly irritated by the fact that Moscow continued its refusal to permit U.S. military attachés or press correspondents to visit the Russian front. Welles raised the matter in conversations with Oumansky on June 26 and June 30, and Henderson brought it up at the dinner table on July 1. Moscow did not budge, however. Henderson and Berle sent a memorandum to Welles on July 30 complaining rather bitterly of Soviet conduct. They stated that the list of military secrets the Russians had requested was itself evidence of "very efficient espionage." They reported the unanimous decision of a meeting of State Department officials that the Russians should be given only normal inspection privileges at American plants, and that, since the Russians denied American attachés permission to visit the war zone the Russians should certainly be denied American military secrets. Welles wrote on the margin of the memorandum the comment "I agree."³²

On the preceding day, Oumansky had been given a blunt statement on the subject when he visited Secretary of War Stimson. During a discussion of Soviet needs he was told by Stimson: "You have taken away my eyes and until I get my eyes back, I cannot take the responsibility of

30. *New York Times*, August 1, 1941, p. 3.

31. Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 557.

32. *Foreign Relations*, 1941, I, 798-99.

recommending giving away our weapons."³³ But for all Oumansky's assurances that he would take the matter up with his government, the Soviet position was not changed.

THE PRESIDENT INTERVENES

Whatever the attitudes of the State and War departments, the President had already personally intervened in the Soviet aid program to expedite the release of equipment and materials and to see to the provision of military supplies. He had seemed content, as previously pointed out, to bide his time during the initial phases of the war in Russia before committing himself to any specific course of action with direct reference to the Soviet Union. This is not the place to explore in detail his attitudes toward the Soviet Union or to compare his outlook with that of the professional diplomats. There are, however, two contemporary evidences of his attitude which need to be noted here.

The first was a letter from the President to Fulton Oursler, editor of *Liberty* magazine. Oursler had sent to the President an editorial that *Liberty* was publishing in its first issue following the German invasion of the U.S.S.R. Entitled "To Hell with Communism," it was a sharp attack on the Soviet government. In answering the letter, Roosevelt drew a distinction between "communism" and the form of government in the Soviet Union—a "dictatorship . . . none of whom are elected." If in Oursler's position, the President wrote, he would condemn "equally" the Russian and German types of dictatorship, "but at the same time," he added, "I would make it clear that the immediate menace at this time to the security of the United States lies in the threat of Hitler's armies. . . ."³⁴ This was the same position the President had made clear in his addendum to Welles's statement of June 23. The day following this letter to Oursler—June 26—Roosevelt gave a more direct indication of his feelings concerning the Soviet Union. Writing to Admiral Leahy in Vichy, he said: "Now comes this Russian diversion. If it is more than just that it will mean the liberation of Europe from Nazi domination—and at the same time I do not think we need to worry about any possibility of Russian domination. . . ."³⁵

Two significant conclusions may be drawn from this remark. The first is that the President seemed disposed to view Soviet political intentions

33. Stimson and Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War*, p. 526.

34. Roosevelt to Fulton Oursler, June 25, 1941 (Roosevelt Library, President's Personal File 2993).

35. Roosevelt (ed.), *F. D. R.: His Personal Letters*, II, 1177; and William D. Leahy, *I Was There* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1950), p. 38.

with considerably less apprehension than the regional experts in the State Department, who were so disturbed over the Eastern European situation. The second, and more immediately important, was that the President did not share the view of his military advisers that the U.S.S.R. was necessarily doomed to a speedy defeat. He was by no means sure that the *Blitzkrieg* would fail to attain its objectives, but he seemed to have some doubts. With each passing day, as the evidence grew that the Russian armies were giving an account of themselves far exceeding the original estimates of London and Washington, the President appeared more and more confident that the Russians could keep the Germans fully engaged at least for the duration of the summer. And, as this confidence waxed, it must have seemed more important to him that the Russians were given every possible encouragement, in order to stave off any chance of their agreeing to negotiate a separate peace if Hitler should offer it to them.

As many commentators were prone to point out during the first weeks of the Russian war, there was little the U.S. could do in supplying aid to the Soviet Union even if it desired to do so. Arms production and stores were grossly inadequate even for the purposes of aid to Britain and China and for the American rearmament effort, but the President was not inclined to concentrate on how little could be done. During the summer of 1940 when his military advisers were of the opinion that Britain was not likely to survive her ordeal and that available quantities of American aid were insufficient to turn the tide, Roosevelt had felt sufficient confidence in his own estimate of the situation to gamble precious stores of American munitions and equipment upon British survival. Rather than dwell upon the meagerness of what was available, he was disposed to use what he had.³⁶

Now almost a year later, in the summer of 1941, he moved toward the taking of a similar calculated risk in the German war on Russia. The sources of his growing confidence in Soviet military capabilities are uncertain, but it would appear that the advices of Joseph E. Davies were a very significant factor. Certainly, as one writer has put it, "It was Davies virtually alone among the President's advisers in those doubtful June days, who counseled a policy of all-out aid to the retreating Soviets."³⁷ Davies himself has given a clear account of his actions during the first days of the Russian war. Serving then as Special Assistant to

³⁶ See the discussion of the aid to Britain problem in Chapter I and the sources there cited.

³⁷ Richard H. Ullman, "The Davies Mission and United States-Soviet Relations, 1937-1941," *World Politics*, IX (1957), 220.

the Secretary of State, the former Ambassador to the Soviet Union was in Madison, Wisconsin, when the war in Russia began. Asked for a statement by reporters, he promptly asserted that the performance of the Red Army "would amaze and surprise the world" and that it "was just plain common sense for us to give the Soviets all the aid we possibly could."³⁸ Nor did Davies content himself with such statements to the newspapers. In a letter written in 1955 he recalled:

Immediately after the attack, I was in constant touch with the White House, with Harry Hopkins and the President. . . . While high officials of the Army expressed the opinion that it was only a matter of weeks before Russia would be conquered, I expressed the contrary opinion, and due to my recent tenure as Ambassador to Russia, I was well-informed as to the strength and power of Russia from a military point of view. It aroused considerable comment when I expressed confidence that the Russian Army would hold Hitler and his allies, and would surprise and startle the world by their defense.

. . . I should be credited with some service in making our country aware of the military potential of the Red Army, in spite of the great body of opinion to the contrary held by our military observers.³⁹

It would certainly appear that Davies accurately gauged the impact of his advices. He was tireless in his efforts in Russia's behalf all through early July. On the seventh of the month he lunched with Sumner Welles to urge that all-out aid be pledged to Moscow. The following day he had a talk at the White House with Harry Hopkins—a man of great influence whose mind was definitely pliable so far as Soviet Russia was concerned, since he knew little of U.S.-Soviet relations. On occasion, Davies also met with the President himself, and, by July 15, had placed his services at the disposal of the Soviet Embassy, with the consent of the Department of State, as sort of a nonsalaried lobbyist.⁴⁰

The nature of Davies' advice and efforts are set forth vividly in a lengthy memorandum that he sent to Hopkins on July 18, following up on his earlier conversations with the presidential aide. Davies warned that, while the Russians had already demonstrated excellent fighting abilities, it was likely that the Germans would push on to seize Byelorussia, the Ukraine, and Moscow, thereby gaining almost 60 per cent of the agricultural and industrial capacities of the Soviet Union. Even so, he continued, Stalin was capable of continuing the war, perhaps from behind

38. Joseph E. Davies, *Mission to Moscow* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1941), pp. 475-76.

39. Letter of Davies to Richard H. Ullman, March 3, 1955. Quoted by Ullman in "The Davies Mission . . .," *World Politics*, p. 221.

40. Davies, *Mission to Moscow*, pp. 489-92.

the Urals. In that event, Davies feared, Hitler might undertake to persuade the Soviets to conclude peace. Hence, the U.S. faced in the German war on Russia a great danger or a great opportunity.⁴¹

Davies was satisfied that the Russians had always had reason to fear that they "were being used as the 'cat's paw' by the West" and that Anglo-French diplomacy had "driven" them to make a bargain with Hitler in 1939. He believed that their leaders had displayed, in his experience, "a real friendliness" for the U.S. and emphasized the fact that they had for long aided Nationalist China and obstructed Japan. These considerations led him to say:

Specifically, I fear that if they [the Russians] get the impression that the United States is only using them, and if sentiment grows and finds expression that the United States is equally a capitalistic enemy, it would be playing directly into the hands of Hitler and he can be counted on to use this in his efforts to project either an armistice or peace on the Russian front after he takes the Ukraine and White Russia. Word ought to be got to Stalin direct that our attitude is "all-out" to beat Hitler and that our historic policy of friendliness to Russia still exists.⁴²

As for the problem of ideological conflict, the former Ambassador to Moscow said to Hopkins that he believed the Russians had no intention of attempting "to project Communism in the United States, nor would it be within the realm of possibility after this war or for many years thereafter for the Soviets to project Communism, even if they wished, in the United States or even Europe." And as for any conflicts in national interests, he suggested that "they had nothing we wanted, and that we had nothing that they could take; so there was a natural basis for a policy of 'live and let live' between our two peoples."⁴³

Such opinions and recommendations met with a sympathetic response at the White House. More and more the President came to see in the continued resistance of the Soviet armies, at least for the duration of the summer, a deferment for many pressing anxieties. He probably needed little encouragement to offer solid evidence for the instruction of Russia's leaders that the U.S. was determined to assist them and to forestall any chance of a German-Soviet armistice. He was no doubt impressed by dispatches from Ambassador Steinhardt during the opening days of July which stressed the appalling swiftness of the German advance, but

41. *Ibid.*, pp. 493-96.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 497. Davies discoursed to Welles on July 7 upon the danger of a separate peace if Moscow should come to feel it were being "used" by the United States and Britain, and Welles admitted that there was "much force" in the argument.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 496.

which also put little store by the prospects of Stalin's concluding a separate peace with Hitler.⁴⁴

So it was that the President, during the first weeks of July, personally intervened to expedite and enlarge the aid program to Russia. On July 9 he told Acting Secretary Welles that he wanted substantial aid sent to the U.S.S.R. before October 1,⁴⁵ and it was significant that on the following day a summary memorandum was submitted to Harry Hopkins which briefed the President's lend-lease supervisor on the subject of Soviet orders in the U.S.⁴⁶ This notice of Hopkins' entering into the picture was a clear augury of what was to come.

For the first time since the outbreak of World War II, Soviet Ambassador Oumansky was received at the White House on July 10. Accompanied by Welles, he talked with the President for some three-quarters of an hour, and the records of that discussion offer the best statement of what the President had in mind. As recounted later in the day by Welles to Lord Halifax, these were the President's thoughts:

The President said that we would undertake to supply urgently to the Soviet Union such of the orders which the Soviet Government desired to place in the United States which it might find it possible to ship and that the President had emphasized the fact that whatever was sent of an urgent character should actually reach the Soviet Union before October 1 at the latest. I added that the President had made clear his own opinion that if the Russians could hold the Germans until October 1 that that would be of great value in defeating Hitler since after that date no effective military operations with Russia could be carried on and the consequent tying up of a number of German troops and machines for that period of time would be of great practical value in assuring the ultimate defeat of Hitler. The President had also stressed his belief that the more machines the Germans were forced to use up in the Russian campaign, the more certain would be the rapidity with which Germany would be defeated, since he did not believe that the ability for replacement on the part of Germany was nearly as great as that which had been supposed. Finally, the President, I said, had laid particular stress upon the fact that whatever it was decided by this Government to send to Russia would be the subject of consultation between this Government and the British Government, since it was a matter of common concern to all three Governments that the supplies which this country might have available be utilized in those particular places where, from the military standpoint, they might prove to be most useful.⁴⁷

44. Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, pp. 545-46.

45. T. H. Vail Motter, *The Persian Corridor and Aid to Russia* (Washington: Department of the Army, 1952), p. 21.

46. Memorandum, Phillip Young to Harry Hopkins, "Russian Situation," July 10, 1941 (OLLA, Russia File).

47. Memorandum of conversation, Welles and Halifax, July 10, 1941 (861.24/512½). Quoted also in Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 546.

The President was not thinking, during July, in terms of a long-range supply program for the U.S.S.R. Reliable information that would have been essential to the making of any such major plans was not then available. Nevertheless, the remarks to Oumansky on July 10, and the earnestness with which the release of materials for Russia was pressed by the White House during the weeks immediately following, testify to the growing importance attached by the President to a policy of aid for the retreating Russians. By the close of July, Harry Hopkins was in Moscow and his report would enormously broaden the scope and planning of the effort in Russia's behalf, but it is significant that before the Hopkins mission the President had personally intervened to hasten the release of supplies.

In a sense the President's early maneuvers with reference to the Soviet-German war bear a resemblance to his actions of the preceding summer in sending help and encouragement to Britain. Many of his military advisers had deemed Britain a poor military risk, and in June and July of 1941 they considered the U.S.S.R. incapable of stemming the German tide. On neither occasion did Roosevelt share these dark forebodings. As earlier discussed, he displayed some doubts from the beginning that the Russians would collapse before the end of summer. Influenced, probably, by the advice of Joseph E. Davies, and impressed by the Russians' performance, he became convinced during early July, it would seem, that the Russians could hold. This presented a new situation and a new opportunity to implement the basic American foreign policy of obstructing German conquest, when the American public—the President was persuaded—was not prepared to accept the necessity of American entry into the war. Since the advices submitted to him by the War and Navy departments were predicated upon the proposition that the Soviet Union would be overwhelmed in the course of a few weeks, the measures suggested by Stimson, Knox, and Stark lost some of their urgency. At the same time, the conservative response to Soviet aid requests that the State Department's aid program embodied became insufficient for his purposes. George Fischer summarized the situation in part very well when he wrote that Roosevelt was basically preoccupied with "the horrifying dual fear of a Russian collapse leading to a German-Japanese juncture in Asia and, possibly, even before that calamity, Stalin deciding to conclude a separate peace with Germany." As Fischer states, military considerations were uppermost, but certainly in the sense of domestic

politics it is hardly accurate to label Roosevelt's steps as "devoid" of "political judgment."⁴⁸

Policy toward the Russian war must be kept in the focus of at least three broader problems facing the President during that July: the state of American public opinion; the consequent hazards attendant upon drastic measures in the Atlantic and upon the Soviet aid program itself; and the question of coping with Japan.

The isolationist opponents of President Roosevelt's foreign policy seized upon the Russian war as final proof that America could and should remain neutral. In the most strenuous fashion, they reiterated this theme and its corollary—that the U.S. could not take the ignoble step of offering its resources for the relief of the Communist dictatorship of Russia. So sensitive did the issue of Soviet-American collaboration seem, many interventionists abstained from any discussion initially of the merits of direct assistance to the U.S.S.R., and many were critical of the President for raising the issue as he did. Certainly, in embarking upon a path that entailed cooperative efforts with Soviet Russia, the President faced some political trials. This was repeatedly pointed out by the contemporary press, and historians who have treated the subject have since stressed the point.⁴⁹

This political difficulty attendant upon aid to Russia cannot be gainsaid. It was an obvious reality which definitely shaped the course of the President's policies. At the same time, the political complexities of aiding Russia must be seen—if they are to be properly understood—not in isolation but in relation to the broader domestic opposition to the administration's foreign policies. To put the matter more directly, the course of action proposed by Stimson, Knox, and other "all-outers" in response to the Russian war—essentially to "clear the Atlantic of the German menace"—offered far more serious immediate political perils than the dispatching of aid to Russia. This was provided, of course, that an open and direct public policy debate on the Soviet aid program could be temporarily postponed and the program left to be improvised and represented as involving only Soviet purchasing of supplies in the U.S. This

48. George Fischer, "Genesis of U.S.-Soviet Relations in World War II," *The Review of Politics*, XII (1950), 364, 366.

49. George Fischer (*ibid.*, p. 366) writes of the serious difficulties that confronted the President because of the "sharp initial opposition of large and influential groups in this country, led by well-organized 'isolationism,' to anything approaching common action with the Soviet government." Motter, in *The Persian Corridor and Aid to Russia*, speaks of the "obvious political reasons" that barred Russia from lend-lease aid (p. 21); Leighton and Coakley, in *Global Logistics and Strategy, 1940-1943*, deal with the necessary "caution" with which the aid program was undertaken (p. 97). Langer and Gleason discuss the question at length in *The Undeclared War*, pp. 537ff.

was possible, and this was done, just as for many months in 1940 the President left aid to Britain suspended on improvisations and postponed for as long as possible any direct confrontation of the issue with Congress.

For the fact was that the measures on the Atlantic that were suggested by Stimson, Knox, and Stark after June 22—and which would have been almost mandatory if Germany rapidly brought the Soviet Union to its knees and then confronted again a beleaguered England—were precisely those measures most likely to produce “shooting incidents” involving U.S. forces. They entailed actions relative to which, for that very reason, the President’s opponents had most tenaciously harrassed his every step throughout 1941. Even the supporters of the President’s policies in Congress, with the exceptions of Senator Pepper and Congressman Buck, were unwilling to deliver any endorsement of aid for Russia. But a comparison of the action taken in Congress during July on the questions of aid for Russia, U.S. naval activity in the Atlantic, the use of conscripted troops outside the Western Hemisphere, and the amending of the Neutrality Act is instructive and suggestive in understanding Roosevelt’s decisions that month.

During the first weeks of the Russian war, three measures were introduced in Congress to prevent or impede American aid for the U.S.S.R. Two were offered by Representative Tinkham (R., Mass.), a pronounced Russophobe, and one by Representative Knutson (R., Minn.), an isolationist stalwart but not a nationally prominent spokesman of the opposition. Tinkham on June 30 introduced House Resolution 256, calling for an investigation of American policy toward Russia and of the extent of Communist influence over U.S. foreign and domestic policies;⁵⁰ and on July 7 he deposited in the hopper H.R. 5248, a bill to forbid the extension of lend-lease aid to the U.S.S.R.⁵¹ Congressman Knutson, on June 28, introduced a concurrent resolution to declare a state of war as existing between Germany and the U.S.S.R., which would have compelled the President to apply the Neutrality Act.⁵²

Little attention, in or out of Congress, was ever focused upon any of these proposals. None was ever brought before the House for consideration. Quietly, and without ceremony, they died in the committee rooms. The convoy issue on the Atlantic, however, occasioned considerable activity during July. Senator Burton K. Wheeler, a keystone in the arch of isolationism, introduced a resolution on that subject on June 30. Inspired by press reports that month in the columns of Joseph Alsop, Drew

50. *Congressional Record*, LXXXVII, 5805.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 5870.

52. H. Con. Res. 44, *ibid.*, p. 5698.

Pearson, Robert S. Allen, and General Hugh Johnson, Wheeler demanded a "thorough and complete investigation" of whether U.S. naval units were engaging in convoy escort duty. The resolution did not die quietly. On July 11 both Secretary Knox and Admiral Stark appeared before a closed session of the Naval Affairs Committee for interrogation.⁵³ During that same week the President decided it was too dangerous to request amendments to the Neutrality Act that would have authorized arming U.S. merchant ships and their entrance into war zones. Senators George and Connally privately advised that such amendments would likely get through but that "the debate would be prolonged and the isolationist group would filibuster on the issue."⁵⁴

In July also, the debates began on the Army's proposal to extend the period of service for the National Guard and men inducted into the Army under the Selective Service Act. The original proposal included a request for authorization to use conscripted personnel outside the hemisphere. So bitter were the objections to that request that it was temporarily withdrawn for fear that it would jeopardize the entire proposal.⁵⁵

The question of American aid to another nation at war with Germany, even if the nation were Soviet Russia, did not provoke the explosive reaction that any suggestion of American involvement in hostilities, directly or indirectly, invariably set off. The Gallup Poll, in July, had concluded that one aspect of the public reaction to the war in Russia was to see in it "new hope" that America could somehow stay out of the European conflict. Even the isolationists, particularly during the military service debates, found a useful purpose to be served by the fact of continued Soviet resistance. They utilized this as a leading point in their argument that the emergency was diminishing, not increasing—an explanation, perhaps, of their failure to make any vigorous attempt to block aid for Russia.⁵⁶

With his sure politician's instinct, the President must have seen in the Russian front, for all of the complications it created, a superb opportunity to fend off, for a time, the perilous questions of direct American involvement. If the Russians were overwhelmed or surrendered, the necessity for facing these questions would have been more critical than

53. S. Res. 138, *ibid.*, pp. 6398ff; and Senate Committee on Naval Affairs, *Investigation of Charges that American Naval Vessels Are Convoying Ships or Have Destroyed German Naval Vessels*, S. Rp. 617, 77th Cong., 1st Sess. (1941).

54. Quoted in Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 579.

55. See the discussion of the military service extension battle in Watson, *Chief of Staff*, pp. 220ff.

56. See the discussion of this in Chapter VII.

ever. In a sense not intended by Secretary Stimson, the President saw in the war in Russia a "precious and unforeseen period of respite." It furnished relief for Britain, and it furnished time for the U.S. to prepare—not only militarily but politically as well. It seems more than coincidental that he pressed the exploitation of the Russian war even as he drew back on some adventures in the Atlantic. Iceland was occupied on schedule, but the earlier authorization to convoy British and Allied ships as far as that new outpost was retracted by the President before it went into effect.⁵⁷

There can be no doubt that Japan also figured in these calculations. On July 1 the President wrote to Ickes, "I simply have not got enough Navy to go round—and every little episode in the Pacific means fewer ships in the Atlantic."⁵⁸ Here was a formidable deterrent to strong measures in the Atlantic theater. On the other hand, the great concern of the President to prevent Japanese participation in the attack upon the Soviet Union was early demonstrated, and visible evidence of American support for Russia was early suggested as one means of promoting this objective. The continued effective resistance of Russia was important, not only to the crisis in the Atlantic, but to the meeting of the Japanese threat as well.

To say that the policy pursued toward Russia during July was less hazardous than the taking of drastic measures on the Atlantic is not to underestimate the formidable political difficulties to the developing association with the U.S.S.R. Just to the extent that collaboration with Russia increased in importance to the President's objectives, so too it became more important to offset to some degree the domestic opposition to such collaboration. In particular the President was concerned that the religious convictions of important segments of the American public, notably Roman Catholics, would constitute a serious obstacle to his plans. Very early in the game he exhibited deep interest in making his course of action palatable to Catholics or, at least, in preventing any dangerous opposition from developing. In this, the President had to reckon with the fact that the Catholic question was broader than a domestic concern. It had international facets, as indicated in the informed reports during the early summer of the apprehensions of some Washington officials that to embrace the Russian cause might place some severe stresses upon hemispheric unity. It was feared that some of the Catholic nations of

57. *Pearl Harbor Hearings*, Pt. 5, pp. 2294-95.

58. Roosevelt (ed.), *F. D. R.: His Personal Letters*, II, 1174.

Latin America might refuse to support such a stand.⁵⁹ There were some unpropitious reports from the Vatican on this score early in July.

Harold Tittman, who was holding the diplomatic fort at the Papacy as the secretary to Myron C. Taylor, the President's Special Representative, reported that the Vatican was keeping a "strict reserve" on the war. It was his feeling that, to the Papal Curia, the "militant atheism" of communism was "still regarded as more obnoxious than the modern paganism" of Hitlerism. Tittman was also fearful that the Catholic Latin countries might actually be impressed by the notion of an anti-bolshevik crusade.⁶⁰

On July 8 the U.S. and Britain both dispatched notes to the Vatican to make clear their positions toward the German-Soviet war. The American note recited Acting Secretary Welles's statement of June 23 and then asserted that the Russian conflict

. . . has not in any way affected the present policy of the United States Government, namely to insure that all possible aid and assistance will be furnished the victims of aggression and our program of assistance to Great Britain is going forward with no alteration whatsoever.

Tittman was instructed to point out, in his presentation of the note, that "the principles and doctrines of communistic dictatorship are as unacceptable and as alien to the American people as are the principles of Nazi dictatorship, and neither one nor the other is tolerated by the American people."⁶¹ The Holy See could have gathered this much, of course, from a mere reading of the June 23 statement. It is noteworthy that the question of direct aid to Soviet Russia was not actually broached, though it was made clear that American opposition to Germany was undiminished.

At any rate, the Vatican made no comment critical of the American position, and in the U.S. there was no position taken publicly by the Catholic hierarchy as a whole. Instead, the hierarchy spoke in diverse voices, chiefly those of Bishop Hurley and Archbishop Beckman. The nature of the presentation of the case that the White House was preparing was meanwhile illustrated in a very interesting memorandum prepared for the President by Harry Hopkins' office and submitted to the Chief Executive on July 3. Its subject matter was the attitude of

59. See the comment of Arthur Krock, *New York Times*, June 29, 1941, Sec. IV, p. 3; and "Aid-for-Russia Issue Flares to Complicate Foreign Policy," *Newsweek*, pp. 13-14.

60. Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, pp. 546-47, citing telegrams from Tittman dated June 30 and July 2.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 547.

the Nazi party toward the church and consisted of quotations from the writings and speeches of Hitler and other party potentates.⁶²

Relieved, for the time being at least, of anxieties concerning some concerted and official manifestation of disapproval from the Vatican or the American hierarchy, the administration made a significant move on the domestic front in mid-July. Postmaster General Frank C. Walker, an eminent Catholic layman, delivered a widely publicized address in Butte, Montana, on July 12, which was obviously framed for the benefit of Roman Catholics. Walker branded as foolish and suicidal any thought that a peace settlement could be negotiated with Hitler and warned that the war could be kept from the New World only for so long as "Britain and Russia stem this mighty tide of conquest, just so long as the British fleet remains intact, and no longer." He urged his countrymen to support assistance for the Soviet Union, saying that the Russian people were fighting for their homes and not for communism. In uncompromising terms he declared: "A cynicism that would condone world domination by Hitler in order to overcome the doctrines of communism is a cynicism unworthy of respect. It is indecent—it is un-Christian."⁶³

These were, nevertheless, little more than preliminary skirmishes on the public opinion front. The President studiously avoided during July—and for a long time thereafter—a direct debate on the policy issue of aiding the Soviet Union. As a result, the Soviet aid program was left to operate on an improvised basis while the White House labored during the early summer, first, to rush aid shipments to the U.S.S.R. and, second, to convince the Russians of the seriousness with which the program was being undertaken.

THE LEND-LEASE OFFICE ASSUMES RESPONSIBILITY

The President realized that in terms of quantity there was little that could be done to assist the Russians before the onset of winter. There were several reasons for this. First, there was a physical problem of transport. Each of the three available routes to the U.S.S.R.—across the Atlantic and North Sea up to the Arctic and White Sea ports, across the Pacific to Vladivostok and the eastern terminus of the trans-Siberian railroad, or around the African coast to the Persian Gulf and through Iran—presented the most formidable kind of logistical problems. Moreover, there was little Soviet flag shipping that could be used, and Britain's

62. Memorandum, Hopkins to the President, July 3, 1941 (Roosevelt Library, President's Personal File 4097).

63. *New York Times*, July 13, 1941, p. 27.

shipping resources were already strained to the utmost.⁶⁴ Also, there was the basic problem of finding supplies to ship and arranging for their transfer to the Russians. The needs of U.S. rearmament and the commitments to Britain could not be met by American industry at that state, and other powers—such as China and the Netherlands East Indies—were desperately clamoring for U.S. aid. Unable to meet these already outstanding demands, where were the harrassed officials in Washington to find materials for the Soviet Union? And under the existing priorities and financing requirements, what legal procedures could be found for transferring to the Russians any materials available, so long as they stood outside the framework of lend-lease? It was a problem, as officials in the War Department at the time expressed it, of “dividing a deficiency.” The Russian program was to make even more complicated an already baffling task.⁶⁵

Still, by early July, President Roosevelt had decided that everything possible should be sent as tokens of American support. The program then took on a new sense of urgency, and the need for administrative reorganization came to be recognized. When the President told Welles on July 9 that he desired all possible aid to be sent by October 1, Welles suggested the creation of a three-power committee, consisting of U.S., British, and Soviet representatives, to discuss the most suitable allocation of supplies. The President made this suggestion to Oumansky in the conversations at the White House on July 10, and the negotiations for the creation of such a committee were begun through the Department of State.⁶⁶

More immediate was the problem of acting upon pending Soviet requests. As already indicated, the first Soviet lists were of formidable proportions, and it was becoming more and more evident that the machinery of the special inter-agency committee was ill-suited to secure the expeditious action that the President eagerly sought. The committee was hampered by inter-agency competition, by its limited jurisdictions, and by the inherent conflicts of priorities in the nebulous and still disorganized complexus of the national defense production program. Needless to say, it faced acute shortages of materials at every turn, and, with negotiations already in progress for even more far-reaching supply com-

64. On the question of supply routes to the U.S.S.R., see the analysis in Leighton and Coakley, *Global Logistics and Strategy, 1940-1943*, pp. 113-14.

65. The important problems of finance and of providing materials for allocation to the U.S.S.R. are treated at length in subsequent sections. See below, pp. 158ff., and the section “The Distribution Dilemma” in Chapter VIII and the sources there cited.

66. Motter, *The Persian Corridor and Aid to Russia*, p. 21; and Fennemore, *The Role of the Department of State in Connection with the Lend-Lease Program*, MS, pp. 154-56.

mitments to Great Britain, the committee chairman reported to Welles after its last meeting on July 16 that little could be done for the Russians. Welles so informed the President and Cabinet on July 18.⁶⁷ The assumption of the special committee and of the operating agencies was that the commitments to Britain were of higher priority than any undertaking on Russia's behalf. Virtually all of the planning for the use of funds under the first Lend-Lease Appropriation had been predicated upon aid to Britain, and, in the estimates being formulated during the summer for additional requests for lend-lease funds, the primary consideration was that of meeting British needs not provided for under the first appropriation. The special committee could, therefore, hardly have made any assumption other than one of priority for Britain.

In the face of this, little was being accomplished in obtaining materials for release and shipment to the U.S.S.R. The State Department was hardly equipped to deal with procurement problems, even with the best of good will, and could do little more than circulate the Soviet lists from agency to agency, canvassing the reactions. The White House concluded that organizational changes were called for. Even though it was not deemed possible for a variety of reasons—domestic political considerations being uppermost—to place Soviet supply under the lend-lease program, it was decided that more expeditious handling of the aid lists could be effected through the Division of Defense Aid Reports, which was the central clearing house for the entire defense aid program.

On July 11 Major General James H. Burns, executive officer of the Division of Defense Aid Reports, was told by Hopkins that the President wanted the agency to prepare to take charge of Soviet supply. General Burns conferred with his two principal aides, Philip Young and Brigadier General Sidney P. Spalding. All were agreed that a special section should be established to handle the Soviet aid operations, and for the direction of this task General Spalding suggested Colonel Philip R. Faymonville, an ordnance specialist who had been a classmate of Spalding's at West Point and who was then stationed at San Francisco. At Burns's request, the White House assented to the immediate transfer of Faymonville and during the course of the evening Burns talked both to Faymonville and to the latter's commanding officer to complete the arrangements. Faymonville was not eager for the job but was willing to accept it if Burns asked him to do so. Two days later, on July 13, Colonel Faymonville arrived in Washington, going promptly to work to organize the

67. Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, pp. 558-59.

Soviet aid section and enlisting Professor John N. Hazard to assist in the task.⁶⁸

This transfer of responsibility from the State Department to the lend-lease office, and the establishment there of a Soviet supply section, testified to the mounting importance of the Russian aid program. It should be emphasized, however, that Russian aid was not at that early date made a part of the lend-lease program.

The selection of Faymonville to direct the Soviet section was a further step of importance. Faymonville had first seen service in Russia during the Siberian intervention after World War I. Over the years he had developed a mastery of the Russian language and from 1934 to 1939 he had served as U.S. Military Attaché at the Embassy in Moscow. Estimates of his abilities and attitudes varied. William C. Bullitt and Loy Henderson reportedly had "serious doubts as to his judgment and impartiality wherever the Soviets are concerned."⁶⁹ Joseph E. Davies, on the other hand, praised his "unusual good judgment" and added that he was "most highly thought of" by Soviet army leaders. Like Davies he had a high regard for Soviet military capabilities, and it was upon the judgment of Faymonville that Davies had relied in good measure in forming his opinions on the subject.⁷⁰ Certainly the selection of Colonel Faymonville to direct the Soviet program, although largely a fortuitous one, was symbolic of a new era in U.S.-Soviet relations. Nor did it fail to provoke misgivings and adverse reactions in some quarters.

WHITE HOUSE PRESSURES FOR RUSSIAN AID

With the creation of a Soviet aid section in the lend-lease office, matters seemed to move with considerable expedition during late July. On the twenty-first the President formally vested the direction of Soviet aid in the Division of Defense Aid reports, though the political realities were underscored in the fact that, officially, Colonel Faymonville had been brought to Washington "for consultation."⁷¹ On July 24 the Soviet Ambassador saw Welles to announce that his government welcomed the idea of establishing a three-power committee in Washington to discuss the allocation of American supplies.⁷² By that date Harry Hopkins was

68. This information was supplied by General Burns in a personal interview on January 29, 1958.

69. Quoted in Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 395, from comment passed on to Hopkins in a memorandum from General Marshall.

70. Motter, *The Persian Corridor and Aid to Russia*, p. 22. A sketch of the career of the controversial Faymonville is contained in the Senate Judiciary Committee, Subcommittee on Internal Security, *Hearings on the Institute of Pacific Relations* (82nd Cong., 1st and 2nd Sess., 1951), Pt. 10, pp. 3327-30.

71. Motter, *The Persian Corridor and Aid to Russia*, p. 23.

72. *Foreign Relations*, 1941, I, 795-97.

in London and would soon embark on a mission to the Kremlin, and negotiations for a formal American commitment to the Soviet Union—though a limited one—were nearing completion. On July 26, as Hopkins left London for Moscow, a Soviet military mission, led by General Philip Golikov, arrived in the U.S. in quest of supplies.

The fact remained that in the actual release of supplies things had continued to move slowly. As a consequence the Soviet Ambassador had abandoned his pose of sweet reasonableness and reverted to his former ways. To Joseph E. Davies on July 9 and again on July 12, he discreetly expressed his concern over the delay in the release and shipment of supplies, remarking at the same time that his government had been "greatly heartened" by the assurances of the President.⁷³ By the eighteenth, Oumansky was unburdening himself with more candor to the Secretary of the Interior, whom he knew well and who did not hold the highest regard for the Department of State. To Ickes, Oumansky complained that he was getting nowhere with Welles, despite the President's promise on July 10 that materials would be promptly shipped.⁷⁴

Then, on July 24, Oumansky called on Welles to announce Soviet endorsement of the three-power committee. Having done so, the Russian "complained vehemently" about the delays being encountered in obtaining supplies. Welles reminded him of the enormous demands being made on America and pointed out that the President had personally intervened. But Oumansky was not noticeably soothed.⁷⁵

The major factors producing delays in the release of supplies for Russia at this stage have already been noted—the problem of transport and shipping, the bewildering task of dividing a supply deficiency, and the legal and financial complications. Contributive to delay also was an administrative impediment. No little chaos existed in the defense production establishment, with responsibilities divided among numerous agencies whose activities were poorly coordinated. This was a factor which hampered the entire rearmament and military aid effort.

The Soviet aid program was also handicapped by one other problem—one which can best be termed a psychological impediment. The first aspect of this was the prevalent distrust of the U.S.S.R. The fact that the Russians made some rather inordinate demands to inspect factories turning out their orders, their political overtures in such matters as the future of the Baltic states, and their dogged refusal to permit American personnel in the Soviet Union to visit the front to obtain first-hand information, combined with their general method of conducting negotia-

73. Davies, *Mission to Moscow*, pp. 490-91.

74. Ickes, *Secret Diary*, III, 582.

75. *Foreign Relations*, 1941, I, 795-96.

tions, did not assuage this distrust. The other aspect of this psychological impediment was the continuing belief of many American officials that it was only a matter of time before the U.S.S.R. collapsed. This could hardly have provided any great incentive to speed aid shipments.

In the face of this multitude of difficulties—logistical, legal, administrative, financial, and psychological—American officials had to set about to translate into action the President's desire that all possible aid be sent to Russia before winter. It was the Acting Secretary of State who set matters in motion. Mindful of all these obstacles, but conscious of the President's desire to hurry matters along, Welles suggested to the Chief Executive that he write to General Burns, to the Secretaries of War and Navy, and to OPM director Knudsen, asking for a definite statement of what could be released to the Soviets by October 1. On July 21 the President did so, directing General Burns to see that the breakdown of Soviet requests prepared for the Cabinet by the Curtis committee was immediately reviewed and asking that Burns submit to him within forty-eight hours a complete list of items recommended for shipment before October. Copies of the directive were sent to the other officials, informing them that they were to cooperate to the fullest extent in the preparation of such a list and stressing the urgency of the situation.⁷⁶

On the evening of July 22 a meeting was held in the office of Brigadier General Hines, executive officer of the Army-Navy Munitions Board, attended by General Burns and Colonel Faymonville, and by representatives of the State Department, the War Department, and the Priorities Division of the OPM. The problem facing the gathered officials was not a simple one. Most of the items on the list were in short supply and were badly needed for the fulfillment of domestic production goals. There was, consequently, "considerable resistance" to compliance with the Soviet requests. General Burns stated the position of the President to the effect that, the longer the Russians could hold out, the longer the U.S. would have to equip adequately its own forces.⁷⁷

At length the group approved a list of items costing \$21,940,000 for immediate shipment or by October 1. It was the "first comprehensive list" of supplies for the U.S.S.R., and the risks that it embodied are demonstrated by the nature of its components. Included were such items as: oil industry equipment, tire plants, equipment for the manufacture of aviation lubricating oil and for crude oil cracking and stabilization plants,

76. Civilian Production Administration, *Industrial Mobilization for War: History of the War Production Board and Predecessor Agencies, 1940-1945* (Washington: 1947), I, 130; and Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 559.

77. Stettinius, *Lend-Lease*, pp. 122-23.

machine tools, aviation gasoline, and molybdenum concentrates. Soviet requests for such articles as these evidenced a determined war effort on their part, but they posed serious dilemmas for American officials trying to speed rearmament in the face of chronic and acute shortages. Such articles could not immediately affect the tide of battle in Russia, however logical the President's general thesis. If, for all their determination, the Russians met with disaster, these valuable materials would fall into German hands. In addition, some of the Soviet orders were for items that did not comply with standard specifications; even if never shipped, they would be of no value to the U.S. This factor led the group to lay down the policy that the only special, nonstandard items the U.S. would deliver were those already ordered by the U.S.S.R. during the preceding months; and that all new orders for a period of at least one year would have to be for types conforming with U.S. specifications.⁷⁸

This list General Burns put before the President on July 23. Along with it was a list of articles totaling approximately \$40,000,000 for subsequent shipment and a series of adverse recommendations on additional requests totaling \$41,266,000. On the remainder of the total Soviet requests—almost \$1,750,000,000—the group had taken no action. The approved lists, it should be noted, covered only requests for facilities and equipment. Action on ordnance and aircraft requests was yet to be processed through the War Department.⁷⁹

The President was determined to obtain prompt clearance for the list of items approved for shipment before October 1 and also to have some action taken with regard to the stupendous Soviet requests for munitions, aircraft, and other military items. On July 25 he turned the list over to his military aide, "Pa" Watson, with this covering instruction: "To take up this morning with the Secretary of War, the Acting Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Navy (if the latter is involved) and get the thing through because there is some mix-up on it and I would like the thing gotten through by tonight."⁸⁰ Final clearance on the immediate shipments list was promptly forthcoming, and on July 27 the President had it given to Oumansky with notice of approval. The Ambassador was also informed that the items not approved had been turned over to the OPM for further study, along with the general ques-

78. *Ibid.*, p. 123; and *Industrial Mobilization for War*, I, 130-31. The principle that foreign orders should, as a rule, conform to U.S. standard specifications, had for long been a guiding one. It had been applied to foreign purchasing programs during 1940 and had naturally been carried over into the lend-lease program.

79. *Ibid.*

80. Roosevelt (ed.), *F. D. R.: His Personal Letters*, II, 1189.

tion of how shipments could best be expedited.⁸¹ The military items posed problems of an even more complicated character.

The War Department, where the belief that the Soviets could not long survive was strongly entrenched, was laboring under a heavy cross long before the Russians had entered into the impatient line of prospective recipients for still nonexistent stocks of American munitions. Painfully short of equipment for its own training purposes and frequently embarrassed by this fact during legislative encounters in Congress, it had for a year wrestled with the problem of reconciling large commitments to Britain with the urgent demands of American rearmament. Even in attempting to meet British needs since the summer of 1940, when considerable pressure had been exerted on the War Department from the White House—transmitted chiefly through Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau—to release all possible materials, there had been no little friction.⁸² If this had been true in dealing with firm and fast friends, it is easily understandable that the military authorities were “extremely reluctant to make the radical adjustments that meeting even a small proportion” of the Soviet demands would have necessitated.⁸³ Having little faith in Soviet survival, and annoyed by Soviet actions and conduct, the War Department considered that aid to Britain was sufficient as the most feasible means of helping the U.S.S.R.

It was not for the War Department to make the basic decision, however, and the pressures upon it were mounting throughout late July. Secretary Morgenthau, whose “aggressiveness” when he was responsible for the British aid program in 1940 had been a source of frequent irritation at the War Department, complained to the President that, in his opinion, the Russians were getting the “run-around.”⁸⁴ The President was of a like mind.

At a Cabinet meeting on August 1, the President discoursed for some forty-five minutes on the Soviet aid problem. Ickes has recorded that the “President started in by giving the State Department and the War Department one of the most complete dressings down that I have witnessed.”⁸⁵ Morgenthau wrote in his diary that the President “went to town in a way I have never heard him go to town before. He was terrific. He said he didn’t want to hear what was on order; he said he wanted to hear what was on the water.”⁸⁶

81. *Industrial Mobilization for War*, I, 131.

82. See Watson, *Chief of Staff*, p. 306.

83. Leighton and Coakley, *Global Logistics and Strategy, 1940-1943*, p. 97.

84. Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 560.

85. Ickes, *Secret Diary*, III, 592.

86. Quoted in Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 560.

Ickes and Morgenthau apparently found this lecture rather amusing. Secretary Stimson distinctly did not. The President recognized, of course, that such requests as those for three thousand bombers and three thousand pursuit planes were utterly out of the question. He insisted, however, upon "token releases" at the least and asked that two hundred pursuit planes be turned over to the Russians. General Marshall and his associates had agreed to the "token releases" of such items as bombs, submachine guns, and ammunition from U.S. Army stocks, but the Chief of Staff insisted that beyond that any shipments of finished munitions to the U.S.S.R. would have to come from British allotments.⁸⁷ As a result, the Army, with the backing of the Joint Aircraft Committee, had at first demurred on the allocation of two hundred fighter planes, but, during the late-July visit to Washington of General Golikov and his Soviet military mission, Stimson had reluctantly agreed to the release of 150 fighters already shipped to Britain and then to the further release of fifty more still in the U.S. All this was to come from the British quota, however, and the Army insisted that only four million rounds of fifty-caliber ammunition could be furnished for the planes. Then the Russians had made the incredible request that the 150 planes already in England be returned to America, trans-shipped to the Pacific coast, and sent to Vladivostok.⁸⁸

These things were rankling in Stimson's mind at the Cabinet meeting of August 1. The President agreed that the request to bring back the planes was absurd, but he was determined that the Soviets get the two hundred aircraft even if they came from Army stocks. Fortunately, the Russians agreed later to have them shipped directly to Archangel.⁸⁹

Stimson was also annoyed by the administrative confusion associated with the Soviet aid program and, indeed, with all supply matters. Although on August 1 the President was not looking for explanations but for action, Stimson did make his point that the only portion of the Soviet aid lists he had seen was that dealing with aircraft. According to Ickes, the discussion that ensued at that point brought out the fact that "the tie-up was in Harry Hopkins' organization." He added:

Apparently no one there has authority to handle this operation because it

87. Leighton and Coakley, *Global Logistics and Strategy, 1940-1943*, pp. 97-98.

88. Rudolph A. Winnacker, *The Office of the Secretary of War under Henry L. Stimson* (Department of the Army, Historical Manuscripts File, Historical Division, 1949), Pt. I, p. 72.

89. Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 560.

[i.e., the Division of Defense Aid Reports] is working under the Lend-Lease Act and that does not cover sales to other countries. Henry Morgenthau interposed that only that morning General Cox, who formerly worked at the Treasury until he was attached to Harry Hopkins, had called him up and said that he was licked.⁹⁰

Before the meeting ended, the President had again made his point that he wanted prompt action. The time had come, he was reported by Ickes as saying, "to take some risks" and to make sure that a situation did not develop that would enable Oumansky or Golikov to report to Moscow that they had been unable to secure either help or encouragement in Washington.⁹¹

As Ickes' diary entries make evident, the declaration of Soviet aid as a component of the lend-lease program would have facilitated the solution of the *legal* problems which led Cox and others working on the Soviet aid operation to feel that they were "licked." These legal difficulties arose, first of all, from the fact that existing legislation assigned priorities to orders for national defense and for lend-lease, and these categories of orders were absorbing the nation's productive capacity in munitions. Since the Russians stood outside the lend-lease program, there was no place to fit their orders in. As for munitions actually being produced and readied for delivery in this period, almost all were manufactured under contracts placed by the U.S. Army or Navy before the enactment of Lend-Lease. That statute, it will be recalled, permitted releases of defense articles from this category of orders to lend-lease beneficiaries, but only to a total value of \$1.3 billion, and this "Billion Three" clause required that in such transfers the Chief of Staff or the Chief of Naval Operations be consulted. American authorities were usually able to find some means of "juggling" contracts in order to make immediately available to the British urgently needed items under this "Billion Three" clause, but in the instance of a nation not under lend-lease this device could not be utilized even to meet an emergency situation. It seemed that the only means through which releases could be made for the Soviet Union was under the Act of June 28, 1940, which authorized the sale of "surplus" or "obsolescent" military articles for which replacement orders had been made, subject to a certification from the Chief of Staff that the munitions in question were not essential to the national defense. This was hardly an ideal solution and was bound

90. Ickes, *Secret Diary*, III, 593. "General Cox" was Oscar Cox, legal counsel and "general improviser" of the lend-lease office.

91. *Ibid.*

to cause the Chief of Staff no little embarrassment.⁹² Even if there had been a "surplus" to sell—which there was not—it left the Russian program without any adequate financing arrangements.

The fact remained that any declaration of Soviet eligibility for lend-lease was at this early date not politically feasible, nor was the over-all status of the Soviet aid operation clearly enough defined to warrant such a step. As will be pointed out, the Russians had not initially displayed any interest in being so included. Improvisations were the order of the day, but even the efficacy of various expedencies used in implementing the President's policy was very early seen as dependent upon the untangling of some administrative knots. Secretary Stimson, who had for a long time urged the reorganization of the production and supply program in a thorough-going manner, but who had borne the brunt of criticism for the meager provision of supplies for the Russians, could not forebear to confide in his diary shortly after the Cabinet meeting of August 1: "This Russian munitions business thus far has shown the President at his worst. He has no system. He goes haphazard and he scatters responsibility among a lot of un-coordinated men and consequently things are never done."⁹³

The President did, in fact, take some action along these lines. He followed through on Welles's earlier suggestion and established the three-power committee. It was agreed that the committee would consist of Oumansky, for the U.S.S.R., of Arthur Purvis of the North American Supply Council as the British representative, and Harry Hopkins or, in his absence, General Burns, as the American member. Colonel Faymonville was to be the executive secretary.⁹⁴ This rather promising step proved abortive, and, in fact, the committee was to meet only one time.

On August 2, the President sent a strong directive to Wayne S. Coy to expedite matters in getting materials delivered to the Russians. Coy, formerly the administrator of the Federal Security Agency, had been appointed in the spring as the Special Assistant to the President on defense matters and to act as a liaison officer with the Office of Emergency Management. His principal task had been to iron out administrative problems connected with the defense program. The Division of Defense

92. In this connection I was able to draw upon a discussion of these problems by Dr. Robert W. Coakley in a draft chapter entitled "The Army and Early Lend-Lease Operations in 1941," originally prepared as a part of his and Dr. Richard Leighton's comprehensive study of *Global Logistics and Strategy, 1940-1943*. Hereinafter this draft will be cited as Coakley, *The Army and Early Lend-Lease Operations*, MS.

93. Quoted in Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 561.

94. Fennemore, *Role of the Department of State in Connection with the Lend-Lease Program*, MS, p. 156.

Aid Reports, it will be recalled, was situated within the OEM. The President named him, in effect, expeditor of Soviet aid *ad interim*. The August 2 directive stated:

I raised the point in Cabinet on Friday that nearly six weeks have elapsed since the Russian War began and that we have done practically nothing to get any of the materials they asked for on their actual way to delivery in Siberia.

Frankly, if I were a Russian I would feel that I had been given the run-around in the United States.

Please get out the list and please, with my full authority, use a heavy hand—act as a burr under the saddle and get things moving!

. . . In regard to bombers, we should make and the British should make small token deliveries. In regard to P-forties, it is ridiculous to bring any back here from England by steamer through the submarine zone and we should expedite 200 of them via Fairbanks from the total number now in this country.

I have told the Russians that I am dividing things into two categories—first, material which can be delivered on the Russian western front in time to take part in battle between September first and October first—and secondly, those materials which physically could not get there before October first. I have chosen that date because after October first, we all doubt if there will be very active operations in view of rain, snow, frost, etc. and that if Germany can be held until then, Russia is safe until Spring.

Step on it!⁹⁵

THE AGREEMENT ON AUGUST 2

On the day of the directive to Coy, the U.S. made its first formal engagement to supply aid to the Soviet Union. Although Oumansky had pressed for a more extended commitment and had sought in various ways to conclude political agreements, the Department of State confined itself to the device of an exchange of notes. Consequently, the texts were agreed to on August 2 and the exchange was completed that day. On August 5, the notes were made public.

Welles wrote to the Soviet Ambassador that the U.S.

. . . has decided to give all economic assistance practicable for the purpose of strengthening the Soviet Union in its struggle against armed aggression. This decision has been prompted by the conviction of the Government of the United States that the strengthening of the armed resistance of the Soviet Union to the predatory attack of an aggressor who is threatening the security and independence not only of the Soviet Union but also of all other nations is in the interest of the national defense of the United States.

95. Roosevelt (ed.), *F. D. R.: His Personal Letters*, II, 1195-96.

The note then stated that the U.S. would give the "most friendly consideration" to Soviet orders placed in this country and would extend "to these orders priority assistance upon the principles applicable to the orders of countries struggling against aggression." It also announced that the Department of State was issuing unlimited export licenses for the shipment of such orders and that the agencies concerned would make every effort to find available shipping and to take other necessary steps to expedite the movement of aid.⁹⁶

In the Soviet reply, stress was carefully placed upon the U.S. statement that Russia was fighting "in the interest of the national defense of the United States." Oumansky went on to declare:

My Government has directed me to express to the Government of the United States its gratitude for the friendly decision . . . and its confidence that the economic assistance you refer to in your note will be of such scope and carried out with such expedition as to correspond to the magnitude of the military operations in which the Soviet Union is engaging, in offering armed resistance to the aggressor. . . .⁹⁷

By the beginning of August, the U.S. had formally committed itself only to the rendering of economic aid to the Soviet Union, and this in the form of a unilateral declaration. By that time the White House had directly intervened to facilitate the procurement activities of Soviet representatives and to press for action on Soviet requirements on the part of the U.S. agencies involved. The President had personally intervened to obtain the release of military items for shipment to the U.S.S.R., even if the quantities involved were necessarily modest. He had approved the creation of a committee representing the U.S., Britain, and the Soviet Union to work out arrangements for a mutually advantageous allocation of American armaments production, and he had ordered the lend-lease agency to establish a special section for Soviet supply and to assume primary responsibility for the program.

Primarily, but not exclusively, the President was thinking at the time in terms of what materials could be sent to Russia before winter set in. In a sense all of this activity in Washington was being superseded almost as it was occurring. On July 30 Harry Hopkins arrived in Moscow for conferences with Stalin and other Soviet officials. He returned to London on August 3 and from there travelled with Prime Minister

96. *Department of State Bulletin*, V (1941), 109-10.

97. *Ibid.* The text of the notes is also in *Documents on American Foreign Relations*, Vol. IV, edited by Leland Goodrich (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1942), pp. 600-1, and in the *New York Times*, August 5, 1941, p. 6.

Churchill to the Atlantic Conference. There he made reports which were to open a new phase in the shaping of the Soviet aid program.

LEND-LEASE AND THE QUESTION OF FINANCE

Before turning to an account of the Hopkins mission to Moscow and the important transformation which it stimulated in the Soviet supply program it is necessary first to describe the financing problems that began to emerge during the first phases of this new American commitment.

Had Soviet aid remained the limited undertaking which seemed originally to have been envisaged, and which most estimates of Soviet military strength in Washington indicated it would have to be, then serious financial problems would not likely have arisen. Some \$40 million in Soviet assets, "frozen" under the Executive Order of June 14, had been promptly released after the German invasion began. In their initial statement of needs, the Russians placed before the American government a massive compendium of aid requests totaling \$1,836,507,823. Obviously, if a serious and long-range supply effort were to be the decision of the U.S., and if Soviet military strength made such a decision feasible, extensive financial help for the Russians would probably have to be forthcoming.

In the face of the frustrating shortages of every kind which had plagued the rearmament and aid to Britain program for months, it was evident that any prompt fulfillment of such an enormous request was an impossibility. The fact was that by mid-July the President was beginning to press his subordinates for strenuous efforts to do everything possible for the Russians, and by the first of August he was demanding immediate action. Even the relatively modest scope of the supplies programmed by early August was sufficient to bring financial problems to the forefront. The Curtis committee had obtained export clearances on orders valued at \$9 million. The first list of recommended clearances sent to the White House from the Division of Defense Aid Reports on July 23 recommended the shipment by October 1 of equipment and facilities costing \$21,940,000 and mapped out subsequent deliveries which brought the total to \$60,663,000. A second report, made in mid-August, brought the recommended list of clearances for the Russians to the sum of \$145 million.⁹⁸ In addition to these items there were military releases, including two hundred fighter planes and other ordnance. Against all this, Soviet dollar assets were patently insufficient.

⁹⁸ "Lend-Lease Liaison with Foreign Nations—Russia," OLLA-Foreign Economic Administration Weekly Reports File, Box 3216.

At the basis of any policy decision with respect to the Soviet aid program there was the question of financial assistance. Yet, it was precisely this question which was the aspect of the Soviet program most directly affected by domestic politics. Its resolution involved complex problems over and above the internal difficulties of administration and allocation of priorities already indicated.

In a sense the Lend-Lease Act presented a ready-made solution to any monetary problems associated with Soviet aid, but a number of factors made it out of the question to apply the provisions of that law to the Soviet Union from the outset. Lend-lease operations were dependent upon appropriations from Congress. In March, immediately following the passage of the Act itself, Congress had voted \$7 billion for its implementation. Over half of these funds had been allocated by late June, though the articles so financed were not definitely assigned until finished and then were subject to White House control over their disposition. Theoretically the President could have put articles cleared for Russian supply under this broader program and have allocated portions of the remaining funds for this purpose, but numerous practical difficulties stood in the way of this.

First of all, initial requests for lend-lease funds had been premised upon British requirements. Great Britain had naturally been led to expect almost everything produced under the First Lend-Lease Appropriation, as well as almost everything that could be released under the "Billion Three" clause—except for small programs of supply for China and the Netherlands Indies.

The time was approaching for additional appropriations requests of Congress for the continuance of lend-lease. Until public and Congressional opinion had indicated that it would accept the inclusion of the Soviet Union under this commitment, on substantially the terms that applied to British aid, there was the risk of endangering lend-lease itself by any premature action along this line. As discussed in an earlier chapter, even administration supporters in the Senate were distinctly noncommittal in their remarks on the subject of Soviet aid. Of those interviewed and willing to be quoted by the press in late June, only Senator Pepper of Florida was prepared to endorse the making of additional substantial appropriations for the inclusion of the Russians under a large-scale defense aid operation. Arthur Krock reported also that the "plague on both their houses" sentiment was shaping up in Congress in the first days of the new war,⁹⁹ and Bertram Hulén found Congress "doubtful, if not

99. *New York Times*, June 24, 1941, p. 18.

skeptical" of any proposal to help the Soviets. Naturally, he wrote, isolationists were adamantly opposed to such a move, but his impression was that even "among Democrats and straight-out New Dealers some objections or hesitations" were common.¹⁰⁰ Clearly, until opinion had crystallized, or until sufficient time had elapsed for the President to exert influence over the climate of opinion, caution had to be the watchword. As the subsequent discussion will point out, he and other administration spokesmen studiously refused to discuss whether lend-lease aid would be supplied to the Russians or took pains to point out that the aid being sent was not programmed on that basis.

There is yet another facet of this problem which must be recognized. The domestic political complications could be assumed in such a situation. But the fact of the matter was that the Russians, in submitting their first requests, asked not to be placed on the lend-lease rolls but to be financed through other devices.

In applying for U.S. assistance, the Soviets displayed skillful caution in their first approaches. First, Ambassador Oumansky called upon Welles to inquire as to the American attitude. Then, Amtorg representatives called upon the Export Control Office to ask assistance in obtaining releases on long-standing orders, and Oumansky and Gromyko then visited Assistant Secretary Acheson to leave the same order lists and to explore further the State Department attitude. Advised of the special organizational arrangements being made, Oumansky spent two hours on June 29 having the procedures explained to him in detail by Curtis. In Moscow, Foreign Minister Molotov on the same day summoned Ambassador Steinhardt to inquire again as to the American attitude and to state that requirement lists were being sent to Oumansky. Finally, on June 30, Oumansky called on Welles to state that "his Government had been deeply satisfied" with the expressions of the official American attitude and that he was "consequently authorized" to present a list of "the immediate requirements of the Soviet Government." Then the question of finance was raised.

As Welles has recorded the discussions of the June 30 meeting with the Russian representative, Oumansky "hesitated" and then said that he had "forgotten a very important part of the conversation which he had been instructed to have with me and that was the method of financing the orders which the Soviet Government desired to place here." This was the Soviet proposal as presented by Oumansky to the Acting Secretary:

100. *Ibid.*, July 6, 1941, p. 5.

He stated that he had been instructed to ask whether this Government would be willing to give favorable consideration to the granting to the Soviet Union of a five-year credit for the payment of the orders which it hoped to be able to place in the United States. He said that in his own opinion this was preferable to any operations under the Lend-Lease Act and in fact was a renewal of a matter which had been under discussion between the two Governments in 1933. I replied to the Ambassador that this was a question which I would wish to submit to the Secretary of the Treasury and other officials of the Government for an expression of their views before I could give him any expression of my own opinion with regard to this suggestion.¹⁰¹

Reasons of political strategy thus dictated, it would appear, an avoidance of any discussion of lend-lease both on the part of Moscow as well as Washington. Russia's reasons for this cannot be defined with certainty, but there are several very plausible and logical explanations readily at hand. For one thing, the Russians may possibly have appreciated the domestic political obstacles within the U.S. to such a move. For another, the Russians almost certainly had no clear understanding of the legal complexities surrounding the U.S. rearmament and defense aid programs and, consequently, did not recognize that finance was only a part of their problem. The implications of the Act of June 28, 1940, and of the "Billion Three" clause they probably did not recognize, nor were they aware, it would seem, of the significance of U.S. priorities controls. Orders not placed under the rearmament or lend-lease programs simply could not, under the law, be assigned top priorities, and the purchaser's financial resources had nothing to do with this situation.

But while an appreciation of domestic political currents, or a lack of understanding of the legal problems involved, would partially explain the Soviets' preference not to be under lend-lease, it seems accurate to surmise that more articulate assumptions underlay their proposals. As pointed out in describing the manner in which the Russians made their approach to the U.S. for aid, they were careful to avoid having to come with their hats in hand. They were petitioners, to be sure, but they ascertained in advance whether the response to their queries would be affirmative. They also entertained their own deep suspicions of the U.S. and no doubt considered it definitely to their advantage to operate outside the lend-lease program.

First, as purchasers rather than participants under lend-lease, they could assert title to the goods ordered rather than leaving the final disposition to the determination of American authorities. Lend-lease orders

101. *Foreign Relations*, 1941, I, 780-81.

placed by the British, it should be borne in mind, were actually placed by the appropriate procurement agencies of the U.S. government. Then, from the pool of finished articles, an appropriate distribution was effected among the British and American forces. With such an arrangement the Russians were probably unimpressed, even if they could have begun to understand it—which is doubtful. Instead of seeing in lend-lease the “unsordid act” which Winston Churchill acclaimed it, they possibly suspected devious Anglo-American artifices. Certainly they wanted to conduct their own purchasing operations and made some quite astonishing demands along these lines. At factories turning out products they had on order, they asked for truly extraordinary inspection privileges. As the Army’s historian of the vast Soviet aid operations in Iran during the war has written:

In this connection [the severity of Soviet inspections] it must be borne in mind that the Russians enforced upon their own people equally strict personal responsibility all along the chain of command. Their readiness to punish individuals of their own forces who passed inferior goods became legendary among the Americans who worked with them in the field. It is unrealistic to deplore the Slav’s lack of easy-going Anglo-Saxon adaptability.¹⁰²

The outstanding factor that appears to account for the Soviets’ preference for credits rather than lend-lease would appear to have been their fetish for secrecy. It has been pointed out how they refused to permit American military observers to visit the front. They were no doubt aware that lend-lease, as it operated with reference to Britain, had involved comprehensive cooperative undertakings in which there was a full and frank exchange of information. The operating procedure of lend-lease, for example, involved the filing of detailed requisitions which elaborated at some length the justifications for the requests.¹⁰³ More than this, it had also involved, in the Anglo-American relationship, far more than procurement and shipment. Particularly in the case of such items as tanks and aircraft, it was standard practice for the U.S. to detail technicians to instruct and train British personnel in the operation and maintenance of the equipment. Actually, this was a permissive undertaking, dictated by common sense considerations. The Russians—who would not permit observers at the front—could hardly have looked with favor on such activities. The fact that the U.S. was planning to set up lend-lease field offices probably added to their apprehensions on this score.¹⁰⁴

102. Motter, *The Persian Corridor and Aid to Russia*, p. 25.

103. See the discussion of War Department requisition procedures in *First Report Under the Act of March 11*, pp. 28ff.

104. Motter, *The Persian Corridor and Aid to Russia*, p. 65.

In a meeting between Ambassador Oumansky, General Burns, and Jean Monnet of the North American Supply Council, on August 2, the basic attitude of the Soviet government in its quest for assistance was stated with clarity in a remark made by Oumansky. He said that, while the U.S.S.R. would gladly answer questions pertaining to its aid requests, it should be clearly understood that statements of need from one of the members of the three-power committee should be accepted as correct by the other members.¹⁰⁵ When, in the winter, Soviet aid became a part of the lend-lease program, the Russian attitude was accommodated to a marked degree.

As for the American government, in its public utterances regarding the supplying of materials to the U.S.S.R. during the course of June and July, it treated with great circumspection the entire problem of lend-lease and financing arrangements. Its statements were, in fact, something less than candid.

It will be recalled that, at his June 24 press conference, President Roosevelt had announced his willingness to supply such aid as he could to the Russians. When asked if such aid would be a part of lend-lease, he answered that he did not know and then jocularly dismissed further inquiries on the subject. At that stage of the game there was, to be sure, little more to be said. The evidence indicates that not until early July did the President actually make up his mind to make a serious attempt to furnish the Russians whatever could be spared on a high priority basis. Nevertheless, throughout July, after the Russians had placed truly formidable requirements lists in the hands of American officials, and after considerable discussion had ensued as to the financing of those lists or such portions thereof as were acted upon, no one in the administration made any frank disclosures of the nature of the negotiations being carried on.

On several occasions, it was explicitly denied that the Soviet aid was being projected under a lend-lease arrangement. At a press conference on July 8, Acting Secretary of State Welles discussed some of the arrangements being made to obtain articles for the Russians, and was quoted as saying that the "preparations are in the direction of paving a way for a decision for placing orders in this country for materials Russia desires" and that "lend-lease aid has not yet arisen for discussion."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Memorandum of the meeting of the three-power committee (attended by Oumansky, Burns, and Monnet, and the secretary, Colonel Faymonville), August 2, 1941. OLLA, Russia File.

¹⁰⁶ *New York Times*, July 9, 1941, p. 13.

On July 26, in connection with the arrival in the U.S. of the Soviet military mission, Welles was again asked by reporters if the Russians were scheduled to receive lend-lease aid. He replied: "The application of the lease-lend act in this connection has not been discussed, nor is it even under contemplation."¹⁰⁷ And on July 30, when it was announced that Harry Hopkins had arrived in Moscow, Welles repeated that lend-lease operations were not foreseen in connection with Soviet orders in the U. S. and that Hopkins' visit to Moscow had nothing to do with any lend-lease arrangements.¹⁰⁸

The President, for his part, continued in the approach that he had given in the June 24 press conference. Asked on August 1 if the Russians were to be put under lend-lease, he answered that Russia was not included in the lend-lease program and that there would be no determination of this until after Hopkins had reported on his conferences in Moscow.¹⁰⁹

Since the Russians had not requested lend-lease aid, it was quite true that the question was somewhat hypothetical and that, as Steinhardt was informed on July 23, it could not be "predetermined."¹¹⁰ At the same time, the impression was given that the Russians were able to pay for the aid requested, and during part of July the press carried numerous misleading reports on both the scope and financing of the Soviet program.

It was reported first, that the Soviet aid lists submitted to U.S. officials went no further than asking for export licenses on orders previously placed with American firms.¹¹¹ As late as July 16, the *New York Times* wrote that the Soviet lists apparently covered only such items as capital goods and raw materials and did not include any requests for military items.¹¹² This led to some speculation in the press that, in view of the modesty of the Soviet applications, the Russians were still entertaining the hope of coming to terms with Hitler.¹¹³

The press reports not only failed to mention the Soviet inquiries for a very substantial loan but conveyed the impression that the Russians possessed ample dollar assets and gold to pay for any supplies obtained. This was announced as the opinion of "experts" early in July,¹¹⁴ and this was the presumption that seemed logical since the administration denied any contemplation of lend-lease operations. It appeared definitely

107. *Ibid.*, July 27, 1941, p. 5.

108. *Ibid.*, July 31, 1941, p. 4.

109. Roosevelt Library, President's Personal File 1-P, Press Conferences, XVIII (July-December, 1941).

110. Telegram, Welles to Steinhardt, July 23, 1941 (861.24/500A).

111. Bertram D. Hulen, *New York Times*, July 2, 1941, p. 1.

112. July 16, 1941, p. 25.

113. *New York Times*, July 2, 1941, p. 5.

114. *Ibid.*, July 3, 1941, p. 4.

confirmed on July 22 when Secretary of Commerce Jesse Jones announced that the U.S. had offered to buy strategic materials from the U.S.S.R. This "implied" that the Russians would not be "clients" under lend-lease, as one reporter put it. Jones remarked that the Russians had not asked for a loan and that they appeared "to be well supplied with cash and gold."¹¹⁵

Actually the subject of a provision of credit had been discussed at some length in both the State and Treasury departments, after Ambassador Oumansky had asked for some arrangements along those lines in his June 30 meeting with Welles. Questions of military feasibility aside, the granting of a loan was a course no less strewn with difficulties than a declaration of Soviet eligibility for lend-lease. Certainly the political risks attendant upon asking Congress to authorize a large credit were equally formidable with asking it to appropriate additional lend-lease funds for Soviet benefit.

For the time being, neither of these alternatives held any promise, either from the standpoint of domestic politics or from the standpoint of the prospects of prolonged Soviet resistance. In the midst of these uncertainties, American officials acted upon two other alternatives that seemed to hold some possibilities.

The first was the purchase from the U.S.S.R. of quantities of gold. Since 1934 it had been Treasury policy to purchase gold offered it at the price of \$35 per ounce, less a small discount for seignorage. The U.S. assumed that the Russians were producing considerable quantities of that precious metal and that they held sizeable stores. In fact, on July 22 Assistant Secretary Berle had cabled to U.S. diplomatic posts in Latin America and elsewhere that the Russians were believed to have something in the neighborhood of \$40 million in gold at their disposal in the U.S. and as much as several hundreds of millions accumulated in the Soviet Union. He instructed American personnel to be on the alert for alleged commercial transactions that the Russians might enter into in order to build up gold stocks outside the U.S.S.R. for future use.¹¹⁶

Early in July, Welles and Oumansky discussed the possibilities of gold sales to finance some Soviet purchasing operations, and Oumansky asked if some assurances could be given that the Treasury would continue to stand ready to buy whatever was offered. Welles took the matter up with Secretary Morgenthau, a strong partisan of Soviet aid who could be counted on to be as accommodating as the law permitted. "In accordance

¹¹⁵ John MacCormac, *ibid.*, July 23, 1941, p. 3.

¹¹⁶ Berle (for the Secretary of State) to U.S. Missions in Latin America, Japan, Australia, Canada, and the Philippine Islands, July 22, 1941 (861.51/2869).

with the understanding reached" between State and Treasury, it was arranged that on August 2, the day that the U.S. made its first formal commitment to support the Russians in their war against Germany through the facilitating of economic aid, an exchange of letters took place between Oumansky and Morgenthau on the subject of gold transactions. Oumansky stated that he would "appreciate assurances" that the Soviet State Bank could export gold "without hindrance" to America to be used to redress the unfavorable balance of trade and that the U.S. government would stand ready to purchase the gold. He was assured by Morgenthau that no restrictions would be applied to Soviet gold or silver exports that were not also applicable to other countries and that this assurance would be effective until August 2, 1942.¹¹⁷

Another alternative means of financing Soviet aid was suggested to Welles in a memorandum from Herbert Feis, special adviser on international economic affairs, on July 3. Feis recommended that, if it should develop that exports to the U.S.S.R. should become substantial, they be connected as far as possible with the procurement from the Soviet Union of critical and strategic materials that the Russians might have in surplus and might ship to the U.S. from their Pacific ports. An advantage of such an arrangement, Feis suggested, would be that it represented a step toward the placing of Soviet aid "on a basis of mutual advantage and mutual defense," instead of leaving it "suspended just as a fragment of our policy of aid to Britain."¹¹⁸

Welles was interested in the proposal and took it up with Ambassador Oumansky when the latter called on him on July 7 to present a more detailed breakdown of the first statement of Soviet needs. On the basis of some informal exchanges on the subject during the subsequent two weeks, the Department of State dispatched to the Soviet Embassy on July 28 a memorandum listing several commodities that the U.S. would be interested in purchasing from the Soviet Union.¹¹⁹

The prospective purchase of Soviet raw materials was closely related to the talks that ensued during July on the subject of a credit for the U.S.S.R. Particularly in view of the fact that the President was determined, as he expressed it at the Cabinet meeting of August 1, that Soviet representatives in Washington not be compelled to report that they had received little encouragement from the American government, Oumansky's request for a credit could not be turned down outright. To explore

117. On this matter I have used a letter from Morgenthau to Welles, dated August 15, 1941, which had attached copies of the August 2 exchange between Morgenthau and Oumansky (611.6131/8-1541 CJC).

118. Memorandum, Herbert Feis to Welles, July 3, 1941 (861.24/548 PSRB).

119. *Foreign Relations, 1941*, I, 818-19.

the situation, the Ambassador was put in touch with Jesse Jones, Secretary of Commerce and Federal Loan Administrator, to see if anything could be worked out with the Reconstruction Finance Corporation or its subsidiaries. Jones agreed in principle to the request, but beyond that he and Oumansky were able to make little progress. The RFC perhaps offered some means of avoiding a public debate on credits for the Soviet Union, but, as Jones informed Oumansky, some provision would have to be made for collateral.¹²⁰ Here the raw materials purchase proposal entered the picture. Jones announced to the press on July 22 that the U.S. would be especially interested in purchasing manganese and chrome from the Soviet Union, but he added that the shipping shortage seemed to foreclose any possibility of a substantial trade developing.¹²¹ Oumansky was discouraged. Aside from the raw materials there seemed to be no basis for any RFC credits.

By the beginning of August the financial aspect of the program of Soviet supply was looming more and more as a crucial problem demanding important policy decisions. The Russians were anxious that something be done to remedy the situation, as attested not only by Oumansky but even in an indirect communication from the Kremlin. In a message sent on August 1, just as he was preparing to leave Moscow, Hopkins told the President that "Stalin is anxious that the final negotiations for the loan from the R. F. C. be handled in Washington and is anxious that it be agreed upon at the earliest possible moment."¹²² Certainly the report that Hopkins was bearing to the Atlantic Conference would make even more urgent the need for a decision.

120. *Ibid.*, p. 796; and Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 558.

121. John MacCormac, *New York Times*, July 23, 1941, p. 3. Besides chrome and manganese, the State Department memorandum of July 28 mentioned iridium, asbestos, platinum, drugs, rabbit skins, bristles, and Turkish tobacco.

122. *Foreign Relations*, 1941, I, 814-15.

VII.

Moscow, Argentinia, and Capitol Hill: The Mounting Importance of the Russian Front

THE HOPKINS MISSION

ON JULY 28 a Royal Air Force PBY Catalina soared aloft from Invergordon, Scotland, en route to Archangel. Seated on the gunner's stool in the rear blister was the lean and haggard figure of Harry Hopkins. His destination: Moscow. His mission: to deliver a personal message from President Roosevelt to Joseph Stalin, dictator of all the Russias, and to appraise first-hand the situation of the embattled Soviet Union.

Hopkins had left Washington some two weeks previous for meetings with Prime Minister Churchill and other British officials and to see to the arrangements for the President and Prime Minister to meet in personal conference. Hopkins was a newcomer and an amateur in this exalted world of high politics and grand strategy, but because of his unique relationship to the President he had already become a key figure in the Anglo-American combination. The mere fact of his departure for Moscow was an event of international significance.

During the London discussions with British officials and with the American military "observers," Hopkins had been struck by the extent to which all Anglo-American planning was dependent upon the outcome of the battle in Russia. Discussions of operations in the Middle East, the Far East, the Atlantic, and of preparations for the defense of the United Kingdom inevitably turned upon this issue. The assumption was, generally, that the Russians would be overwhelmed, but despite the overriding importance of the eastern front and the fact that the Russian war was by then several weeks old, Soviet capabilities remained largely an unknown quantity. Hopkins learned that the British military mission in Moscow had been unable to obtain any information of real value, and from Churchill he gained the impression that the Kremlin had shown con-

siderably more interest in reaching political understandings with Britain than in the British offers of military aid. The obvious importance of securing accurate knowledge of the Soviet position, and the deeply felt need to encourage the Russians to fight on as long as possible, readily suggested the advantages of a special mission to the Kremlin. On July 25 Hopkins drafted, with the help of Ambassador Winant, a message to the President requesting authorization for such an expedition. The pertinent passages of the message stated:

I have the feeling that everything possible should be done to make certain the Russians maintain a permanent front even though they be defeated in this immediate battle. If Stalin could in any way be influenced at a critical time I think it would be worth doing by a direct communication from you through a personal envoy. I think the stakes are so great it should be done. Stalin would then know in an unmistakable way that we mean business on a long-term supply job. I of course have made no moves in regard to this and will await your advice.¹

The original suggestion of this special mission has been variously ascribed to Churchill, to Winant, and to Hopkins himself.² It is suggestive that Joseph E. Davies had already urged upon both Hopkins and the President the value of getting "word to Stalin direct." In any event, the important point was that the mission was undertaken and that Hopkins carried it out.

President Roosevelt replied to Hopkins the day following that "Welles and I highly approve Moscow trip," and all necessary arrangements were speedily completed. Welles transmitted to London a personal message to Stalin from the President, and with this credential Hopkins landed at the Soviet capital on July 29. He was met by Ambassador Steinhardt and numerous Soviet officials and taken to the Embassy for some rest. There he described to Steinhardt the essence of his mission as the ascertaining of whether the bleak estimates of the Russian military situation that prevailed in the War Department and which permeated the reports of the military attaché—Major Ivan Yeaton—were correct appraisals. Steinhardt told him that a knowledge of Russian history mitigated against any hasty conclusion of a swift German victory, but he pointed out that foreigners were held in such suspicion by the Soviet government that accurate information was difficult to obtain in Moscow.

1. Quoted in Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 318.

2. See Sherwood's discussion *ibid.*, pp. 317, 953. John Gilbert Winant in his *Letter from Grosvenor Square: An Account of a Stewardship* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1947), wrote that he called to Hopkins' attention the advantages of sending a special emissary to the Kremlin (p. 207).

Hopkins expressed his determination to penetrate somehow the barriers of suspicion.³

Hopkins had only a little over two days to spend in the Soviet capital since it was necessary that he return to Britain in time to leave with Churchill for the meeting off Newfoundland with President Roosevelt. There was no time for any tour. His purpose was to engage in conversations "at the summit," and, since the Russians understood the importance of their sudden guest, this was promptly arranged. The highlights of the Hopkins mission were his meetings with Stalin, at the latter's quarters in the Kremlin, on the evenings of July 30 and 31.

The very cordial message sent by the President to Stalin had reiterated the U.S. position that "all possible aid" would be supplied to the Soviet Union and assured the Soviet leader that he could "treat Mr. Hopkins with the identical confidence" that he could feel in speaking directly to the President. The President also expressed in the letter the "great admiration" of the U.S. for the "superb" defense of their homeland by the Russian armies and people. In his first meeting with Stalin on July 30, Hopkins enlarged upon all this by pointing out that his was not a "diplomatic" mission in that he did not "propose any formal understanding of any kind or character," by stressing to his host the President's view that Hitler was the enemy of all mankind, and then by explaining his own relationship "to the administration." Stalin responded by discoursing upon the necessity of a "minimum moral standard" in international relations, without which "nations could not co-exist," and which was totally lacking in the conduct of the German government. Toward Germany he said that the American and Soviet governments held corresponding views.⁴

With these preliminaries disposed of, the first meeting turned to the subject of Soviet needs and American supply. For the immediate future Stalin asked for anti-aircraft guns, for machine guns, and for rifles. As to long-range needs, he stressed aviation gasoline, aluminum, and other items on the list presented at Washington. The Soviet dictator expressed his willingness to welcome any technicians the U.S. could send to instruct in the use of materials supplied and gave assurances that the Russians would "show us everything about Russian equipment." Finally, the

3. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 327. This description of his mission, and the text of the July 25 cable to the President, indicate the skepticism already in Hopkins' mind toward the prognostications of the military. As was true in most instances, Hopkins reflected the outlook of the President, whose doubts have been previously described.

4. The text of the President's letter to Stalin is in *ibid.*, pp. 321-22, and the text of Hopkins' report on his first meeting with Stalin is at pp. 327-30. Hopkins' reports have also been printed in *Foreign Relations, 1941*, I, 802-14.

alternative supply routes were discussed briefly. The meeting then concluded, with the understanding that Stalin would place the same hour at Hopkins' disposal each day the latter remained in Moscow.⁵

On the next morning Hopkins met with Stafford Cripps, the British Ambassador. They agreed that a joint message should be sent to Stalin from Churchill and Roosevelt, following the Atlantic Conference, proposing a meeting in Moscow to work out a long-range supply program. Cripps prepared a draft of the message, which Hopkins carried to the conference and which, with slight alterations, was dispatched to Stalin later in August. The two men were in agreement, of course, that the conference with the Russians should not be held until the fall, when it could be known with some assurance that a front would be maintained in Russia through the winter.⁶

That afternoon Hopkins and Steinhardt met with Foreign Minister Molotov to discuss the Far East. Hopkins made it clear that the President was not inclined to make any threats against Japan which could not be supported by immediate action if Japan resorted to aggressive measures, but he volunteered the comment that the U.S. "could not look with complacency" upon a Japanese adventure in Siberia. Molotov replied that he believed that the step needed to prevent further aggression by Japan was a "warning" to Tokyo by President Roosevelt. Hopkins thought it "perfectly clear that the implication of his statement was that the warning would include a statement that the United States would come to the assistance of the Soviet Union in the event of its being attacked by Japan." Hopkins gave assurances to Molotov that the U.S. was watching developments carefully but hoped to avoid any "provocative" steps with reference to Japan. He did agree to convey to the President Molotov's concern over the Siberian problem, but beyond that he could promise nothing.⁷

Then, that evening, Hopkins returned to the Kremlin for his second and final meeting with Stalin. This meeting lasted for three hours. Besides Hopkins and the Soviet Premier, the only person present was Maxim Litvinov, so recently recalled from oblivion, who acted as interpreter.

Hopkins began the meeting by saying that the President desired to have Stalin's personal analysis of the military situation. Stalin discussed this at great length, and Hopkins was impressed by the fact that the Soviet dictator simply assumed that the front would hold through the

5. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp. 328-30.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 331-32.

7. Quotes are from the reports made by Steinhardt and Hopkins on the talks with Molotov, in *ibid.*, pp. 331-32.

winter and hence placed emphasis on the spring campaign. Consequently, Stalin put great stress upon the importance of substantial assistance from the U.S. This brought the conversation to a discussion of the comparative war production capabilities of Germany and the Soviet Union. Hopkins asked about the location of Soviet munitions factories. He wrote afterward:

[Stalin did]not reply to this in detail but indicated that about 75% of the sum total of his munitions plants, the percentage varying depending on the type of plant, were in the general areas of which Leningrad, Moscow and Kiev were the centers.

I gained the impression from him that if the German army could move some 150 miles east of each of these centers, they could destroy almost 75% of Russia's industrial capacity.

Stalin expressed confidence that the front would be to the west of each of these centers throughout the winter, "probably" no more than a hundred kilometers further to the east than the German advance to that date.⁸

Hopkins then turned to the specific problem of American aid. He said that the U.S. already had heavy supply commitments to Britain, China, and Latin America and was also working to build its own forces. Any long-range supply program would necessitate having "complete knowledge, not only of the military situation in Russia, but of type, number, and quality of their military weapons, as well as full knowledge of raw materials and factory capacity." Further, he said that the U.S. and Britain would probably not feel prepared to furnish such articles as tanks, anti-aircraft guns, and aircraft to the U.S.S.R. "unless and until a conference had been held between our three governments, at which the relative strategic interests of each front, as well as the interests of our several countries, was fully and jointly explored." He added that he was not empowered to propose "officially" such a supply conference but merely wanted to suggest its advantages. To this Stalin answered that he would receive such a proposal "sympathetically" and would give the matter his "personal attention."

Hopkins commented in his report to the President that he had realized the importance of postponing such a meeting until the outcome of the summer campaign in Russia was known with greater certainty and had therefore suggested it be held as late as possible. To Stalin he had remarked that he was aware that the Soviet leader was fully occupied with

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 333ff., contains the full text of Hopkins' account of this second meeting with Stalin.

the battle at hand so that such a conference would not be immediately feasible. Stalin answered that he believed the front would be stabilized not later than October 1, an estimate which led Hopkins to suggest to the President that it be scheduled not before October 1 and not later than October 15.

Hopkins' reports on these talks were written for the President and for the State, War and Navy departments. A final portion of the report was marked "for the President only." Therein were recounted Stalin's remarks concerning the prestige and influence of the U.S. and of President Roosevelt and his discussion of American participation in the war. Stalin said that, in view of the fact that the Germans were "war-weary" and because conquered Europe was restless under German rule, the announcement of an American declaration of war would utterly demoralize the German nation. The "world influence of the President and Government of the United States," he told Hopkins, "was enormous." He frankly told the President's emissary that Britain and Russia could not alone defeat Germany and that it was "inevitable" that the U.S. would go to war against Germany. The "one thing," he said, that could defeat Hitler, "perhaps without ever firing a shot, would be the announcement that the United States was going to war with Germany." To all of this Hopkins could only vouchsafe the answer that his mission was restricted to supply matters and that German encroachment upon U.S. vital interests would determine American entry into the war.-

The following morning, just before taking his leave from Moscow, Hopkins transmitted a brief message to the President. The sum and substance of his report was included in his statement that "I feel ever so confident about this front." He said that morale was good, that there was a determined spirit, and he reported Stalin's anxiety that the RFC loan arrangements be hurriedly concluded.⁹

These meetings with Stalin had made a profound impression on Harry Hopkins. Ambassador Steinhardt reported to the State Department that Stalin had talked to Hopkins "with a frankness unparalleled in my knowledge in recent Soviet history [on] the subject of his mission and the Soviet position." He was sure that the visit had been "gratifying" to the Russians, as evidenced by the cordial reception given to Hopkins on every occasion, and that it had "greatly encouraged the Soviet war effort."¹⁰ There seems to be little basis for doubt that he had succeeded in his purpose of convincing Stalin that the U.S. "meant business on a long-range supply job."

9. *Foreign Relations, 1941, I*, 814-15.

10. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp. 346-347.

Hopkins brought to the Atlantic Conference and home to Washington an experience quite at variance with those of American officials long accustomed to dealing with subordinate Soviet authorities. In place of an inordinate secretiveness, he had found at the "summit" an unprecedented frankness. To him Stalin had said that he would welcome American technicians, that he would gladly share military data with the U.S., and that he would welcome an American army, under American command, anywhere on Soviet soil. Nor, it should be noted, had the dictator failed to pay warm tribute to the President personally and to the U.S. Hopkins must have felt that the arguments of Davies were clearly confirmed. Certainly the affair made a favorable impression on the President's envoy. In a magazine article a short time later he wrote of Stalin and the Soviet government in generally complimentary terms.¹¹ To him, at least, the wall of suspicion did seem penetrated.

George Fischer has spoken of Hopkins as a "symbol" of developing American policy after his mission to Moscow and has said that Hopkins' role, as it thereafter emerged in 1941, "indicated . . . that the diplomatic caution, if not aloofness, vis-à-vis the Soviet government urged by high State Department officials such as Loy Henderson, then chief of its Russian division, had been overruled."¹² Much can be said for this viewpoint, and it is definitely true that during the war years that followed Hopkins remained a zealous champion of Soviet aid. Clearly also, his was a viewpoint of the U.S.S.R. hardly comparable to that of Loy Henderson. At the same time, it would be a mistake to over-emphasize the influence of the report made by Hopkins after his brief sojourn in the Soviet capital. The earlier discussion here of the policy decisions reached in Washington during July and the first days of August demonstrate that Roosevelt had already made up his mind to give the Russians all the help he could, if they continued to hold out against the German drive, limited only by the extent the American public and Congress would cooperate. In that sense Colonel Faymonville was a symbol antecedent to Hopkins. During July the President's actions already bore an imprint more nearly akin to the Davies' interpretation of the U.S.S.R. than the attitudes of the Russian specialists in the Department of State. What Hopkins did accomplish was to supply evidence that the Russians could maintain a permanent front if they received adequate

11. "The Inside Story of My Meeting with Stalin," *American Magazine*, CXXXII (December, 1941), pp. 14-15, 114-17. Hopkins therein spoke of Stalin as "austere, rugged, determined"; of his conversation as "clear, concise, direct." Of prior Nazi-Soviet relations he remarked that "whatever your personal feelings about the U.S.S.R. may be, it is to Russia's credit that she has observed her commitments and treaties to the letter."

12. "Genesis of U.S.-Soviet Relations . . .," *The Review of Politics*, 368-69.

assistance—that they were meeting the German thrusts capably and effectively and represented a sound military investment for both Britain and the U.S. His reports indicated that the war in Russia had promise of becoming far more than a “temporary breather” and suggested that if aid were to be given—a decision already reached and acted upon—it should be programmed on a long-range basis. Herbert Feis has summed it up in his comment that, instead of the “turning point” in U.S.-Soviet relations which Sherwood interpreted the Hopkins’ mission to be, it was more nearly a “point of no return.” Hopkins’ impressions of Stalin, his confidence in Soviet military capabilities, and his receptiveness to the tributes paid by Stalin to Roosevelt and to America all “had given a firm basis for an already strong inclination.”¹³ Hopkins’ flying visit to the Kremlin was productive not so much in new policy decisions as in the attachment of new dimensions and new urgency to previous but tentative policy trends.

THE ATLANTIC CONFERENCE

The day following his second conference at the Kremlin, Hopkins left Moscow for the return flight to Britain. At Scapa Flow he joined Prime Minister Churchill and his staff and in that company sailed westward aboard H.M.S. *Prince of Wales*. On August 9 the British battleship dropped anchor off Argentina, Newfoundland, the pre-arranged site for a personal meeting of the Prime Minister and President Roosevelt. Here, at the Atlantic Conference, Hopkins told of his meetings with Stalin. He conveyed to the President and the Prime Minister the great confidence that his mission had implanted in his own mind and found each of the statesmen prepared to act along the lines he suggested. It was agreed that a supply conference should be jointly proposed to Stalin, and, with few modifications, the draft written in Moscow by Stafford Cripps was accepted as an appropriate presentation of the Anglo-American position. As delivered to the Kremlin by the U.S. and British ambassadors on August 15, and thereafter published in Washington and London, the statement gave high praise to “the splendid defense” of the Russian armies and assured Stalin that both nations were cooperating to “provide you with the very maximum of supplies that you most urgently need.” It was submitted that the time had come to think in terms “of a more long term policy, since there is still a long and hard path to be traversed before there can be won that complete victory without which our efforts and sacrifices would be wasted.” The joint message continued:

13. Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin*, pp. 13-14.

... In order that all of us may be in a position to arrive at speedy decisions as to the apportionment of our joint resources, we suggest that we prepare for a meeting to be held at Moscow, to which we would send high representatives who could discuss these matters directly with you. If this conference appeals to you we want you to know that pending the decisions of that conference we shall continue to send supplies and materials as rapidly as possible.

We realize how vitally important to the defeat of Hitlerism is the brave and steadfast resistance of the Soviet Union and we feel, therefore, that we must not in any circumstances fail to act quickly and immediately in this matter of planning the program for the future allocation of our joint resources.¹⁴

This pledge of American resources to a common pool of the three powers, for the purpose of a combined effort against Hitler's Germany, was by far the most sweeping declaration made to that date regarding the policies to be followed in support of the Soviet Union. Between this pledge and its political implementation by the U.S. government, there was a considerable distance to be travelled. However, there was yet ample time, since it was not planned that the conference should be held before the end of September. In addition, the joint message to Stalin was overshadowed in the publicity attending the announcement of the dramatic meeting on the *Augusta* and the *Prince of Wales* by the issuing of the Atlantic Charter.¹⁵

For the British government, there was a different kind of difficulty to be surmounted in the implementation of this pledge to the U.S.S.R. Prime Minister Churchill, even before his departure from London for Newfoundland, anticipated the framework in which American military authorities would proceed in the allocation of munitions and equipment to the Soviet Union. He knew that much of the material could only come from supplies previously marked for Britain. For that reason he suggested to Lord Beaverbrook, Minister of Supply, that he plan to join him at Argentia on the eleventh or twelfth and then to go on to Washington where, with Arthur Purvis of the North American Supply Council, he could deal with the problem of the "painful splitting of supplies between Great Britain and Soviet Russia which was desirable and also inevitable."¹⁶

The Prime Minister was also concerned with the necessity of a tremendous increase in the American production effort if the needs of the three powers were to be met. On August 11, he prepared a lengthy

14. *Department of State Bulletin*, V (1941), 134-35.

15. The omission from the Charter of any reference to religious freedom will be taken up elsewhere in this study.

16. Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, p. 445.

memorandum dealing with these closely interrelated problems, in which he concluded:

It would seem indispensable that the re-equipment of the Russian armies should be studied at once upon a grand scale. After preliminary conferences between British and United States supply departments, it would seem advisable, and indeed inevitable, that a further conference should be held in Moscow. Both for this purpose and in any preliminary conference that may be necessary, the Prime Minister would nominate Lord Beaverbrook, Minister of Supply, who should arrive here today, as the British representative, with power to act for all departments.¹⁷

As the message to Stalin showed, the Prime Minister here substantially summarized the plans made at the conference at Argentia for the Soviet aid program. The U.S. agreed to the necessity for the preliminary discussions with Britain and the suggested supply meeting in Moscow thereafter. Hopkins' health forbade his returning to the Soviet capital, and it was fairly definitely arranged before the Atlantic meeting ended that W. Averell Harriman, the lend-lease representative in London, would lead the American delegation to the projected conference at Moscow.¹⁸

In every important respect, the tidings brought from the Kremlin by Harry Hopkins had been accepted by both Churchill and Roosevelt as the basis for the policy approach to the war in Russia. It was agreed that the supply conference in Moscow should await the passage of sufficient time for both London and Washington to see where the front would lie for the winter, but the working assumption upon which policy planning was proceeding was that a winter stalemate would be effected by the Russian armies.¹⁹

The problem of countering the renewed activity of Japan was a foremost topic for discussion at the Atlantic Conference. Since June 22 American officials had been concerned with the repercussions that the German-Soviet war might produce in the Far East, and this concern had been a major factor contributing to the decision to support the Soviet Union. At Moscow, Hopkins had found the Russians obviously worried over the likelihood of a Japanese attack upon Siberia, and to counter this danger Molotov had indirectly asked that President Roosevelt issue a

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 848-49.

18. *Ibid.*; and Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 359.

19. The published accounts of the conference and of Churchill's actions are quite at variance with the allegations of Elliott Roosevelt that the Prime Minister stoutly resisted any division of supplies with the U.S.S.R. and that he put little store on Russia's holding out. See Elliott Roosevelt, *As He Saw It* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1946), pp. 22-23.

strong warning to Tokyo. At Argentia, the Japanese menace was paramount in Churchill's mind, and he sought to persuade the President to serve Japan with a warning against further encroachments to the south. Both belligerents in the war against Germany looked to America to hold Japan in check.

By the time of the Atlantic Conference, Japan had already acted to capitalize upon the war in Russia. During July it had advanced into Indochina, occupying strategic bases there after putting heavy pressure upon the Vichy government and placing itself in a position to undermine both the British and American positions in the Far East. Washington had retaliated by freezing all Japanese assets in the U.S.—an act that had produced consternation in Tokyo. Prime Minister Churchill came to Argentia deeply worried that Japan was preparing to strike a blow at Britain, a blow which could well be disastrous. He pleaded with the President and Welles to issue to Japan a stern warning that, if Japan moved against a third power, the U.S. would act swiftly to institute such countermeasures as it deemed necessary. Only such a patent threat of war, he believed, would restrain Tokyo, and he believed that the warning should be joined in by Britain, the Netherlands East Indies, and, possibly, the Soviet Union.²⁰

Such medicine was too strong for Washington's taste. The Prime Minister's warning was toned down considerably and further softened by Hull after Roosevelt returned to Washington. The U.S. was well-advised as to Tokyo's intentions but wanted to continue the informal conversations then in progress with the Japanese in order to stall for time, if nothing else. Further, the news of the vote in the House of Representatives on selective service extension during the week of the Atlantic Conference must have cooled any ardor the President might have felt for the dispatch of so stern a warning.²¹ All this is relevant to the shaping of policy toward the Soviet Union from several vantage points.

In the broad framework of American policies and interests in the midst of that critical summer, there was a clear relationship to the Soviet war effort and the renewed activity of Japan. Russia's fight for survival in the west had removed one of the restraints upon Japan's path to empire. If Japan were determined to embark upon further expansionist drives, as the move into Indochina confirmed, and thereby to impinge further upon British and U.S. security in the Far East, the continued absorption

20. Feis, *Road to Pearl Harbor*, pp. 255-56. A good presentation of the British viewpoint is in S. Woodburn Kirby, et al., *The War Against Japan*, Vol. I, *The Loss of Singapore* (*History of the Second World War, United Kingdom Military Series*. London: H.M. S.O., 1957), pp. 69ff.

21. Feis, *Road to Pearl Harbor*, pp. 256-57.

of German power on the Russian front would become even more important to the Western democracies. The precarious strain under which the British Empire already labored, coupled with the inadequacy of American military strength and the uncertain state of the climate of American opinion, placed these considerations in even bolder relief.

More directly related to the German-Soviet war was Washington's realization that the Japanese had not ruled out of their plans the possibility of an attack upon the Maritime Provinces. The advance into Indochina had been the first step in exploiting the Russian war, but it was clear that Tokyo was prepared to move northward if appropriate opportunities presented themselves. A catastrophe for Soviet arms in the west would have served to open the doors of the Maritime Provinces.²²

At the Atlantic Conference additional thought was given to what policy should be pursued in the event of a Japanese attack upon the Soviet Union. The American and British chiefs of staff discussed the problem on August 11 and 12. The British were unable to reach a decision, however, as to whether they would go to war with Japan if such a contingency arose, in part because the U.S. was unresolved as to its own action if the British did go to Russia's aid. Admiral Stark later commented: "I have done my utmost to get a decision—it can't be had now either here or in London—I make no forecast."²³

Tension between Tokyo and Washington was further increased in August by the growing evidences of a Soviet-American *rapprochement*. The Japanese government was already uneasy over this development. On August 15 when Soviet Ambassador Smetanin asked Foreign Minister Toyada again about Japan's intentions, he was informed that Japan intended to abide by the Neutrality Pact but warned that if the U.S.S.R. granted military bases to a third power, Japan would be compelled to react.²⁴ Toyada was worried over the shipment of U.S. supplies to Russia through Vladivostok and over the prevalent rumors that the U.S. was seeking to acquire bomber bases on Kamchatka. The announcement of the Moscow conference proposal added to Tokyo's concern. The Japanese press warned that Japan could not "remain indifferent" to such proceedings, and the charges that the U.S. was bent upon the encirclement of Japan waxed in intensity during August.²⁵

22. See the G-2 memorandum of August 17, in *Pearl Harbor Hearings*, Pt. 14, pp. 1346-47.

23. Letter of Stark to Admiral Kimmel, *ibid.*, Pt. 16, p. 2183.

24. Jones, *Japan's New Order in East Asia*, p. 220.

25. *Foreign Relations. Japan, 1931-1941*, II, 340. A survey of Japanese press comment in early August was given by Otto Tolischus in the *New York Times*, August 18, 1941, p. 1.

The President and Hull were anxious to mollify Tokyo, in order to postpone any precipitate reckoning in the Far East, and were for that reason not disposed to attach any great fanfare to the shipment of supplies to Vladivostok. The severe economic reprisals instituted against Japan after the occupation of Indochina made this issue even more sensitive. To their dismay, Secretary Ickes rashly rocked the boat in early August by releasing a statement on the shipment of gasoline to Vladivostok. The President told Ickes that this gave him "three or four very uncomfortable days" when he heard of it and that Secretary Hull had "hit the ceiling" upon reading the release.²⁶ The Japanese made oral representations in both Moscow and Washington concerning the gasoline shipments and were embittered that the U.S. supplied the U.S.S.R. with goods denied to them.²⁷ In the U.S. there was some concern once again that Japan might go so far as to attempt to blockade Vladivostok. If such action were attempted, Admiral Stark and Secretary Knox advised Hull that, in their opinion, the U.S. should refuse to recognize its legality unless Japan had also declared war on the U.S.S.R., and should continue to make shipments to Vladivostok with naval escort if necessary.²⁸

Hoping to avoid a showdown with Tokyo for as long as possible, the U.S. would have been hard put to have reached a decision to act if Japan had marched into Siberia or blockaded Vladivostok. As it was, neither action materialized, and the informal conversations with the Japanese emissaries in Washington continued throughout the summer and fall. Week by week the Far Eastern crisis grew more tense, inching forward steadily toward an impasse that could only be broken by war. As this climax approached, the advantages that accrued to America and Britain from the continuation of the war in Russia were more than welcome. Russia's continued resistance was seen by some American officials as one of the few factors that might eventually produce some relaxation of tensions in the Far East. Admiral Stark, in a letter written on September 22, made the observation that Japan was marking time while awaiting the outcome of the battle in Europe. He commented:

If Russia falls, Japan is not going to be easily pried away from her Axis associations. She will no doubt grasp any opportunity that presents itself to improve her position in Siberia. If Russia can hold out (which at the moment hardly appears possible), I feel that there might be more hope of some sort of an agreement with Japan.²⁹

26. Ickes, *Secret Diary*, III, 611.

27. *Foreign Relations, 1941*, IV, 406-7, 420.

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 442-43.

29. From a letter to Admiral Hart, quoted in *Pearl Harbor Hearings*, Pt. 5, p. 2118.

FOREIGN POLICY DEBATES IN CONGRESS, JULY-AUGUST

As the conferences at Moscow and Argentina transpired, important foreign policy debates were in progress at Washington which touched upon the developing pattern of policy being formed in the executive branch toward the Soviet Union. The fact that Russia had not surrendered and that its armies, though in retreat, had inflicted serious losses upon the theretofore invincible German military machine, was beginning, by this time, to produce its effects upon the American political scene. The interventionist press in general was still speaking in guarded phrases about Russia's prospects, but the tone was decidedly different from the pervading skepticism of late June. *Time* magazine commented at the end of July that "for a whole week the German *Krieg* had been without *Blitz*, a lightning war with the lightning extracted."³⁰ In the same week the *New York Herald-Tribune* editorialized that Russia had obviously been a far more formidable foe than Hitler had anticipated,³¹ and the *Washington Post* stated that the German time-table was clearly "out of kilter."³² These papers would not forecast a German failure to achieve the conquest of the U.S.S.R., confining themselves to a "so far—so good" outlook, but they could not abstain from conjecturing about the chances of a winter stalemate. The Committee to Defend America began to believe that there were "grounds for hope" that, in Russia, Hitler might have met his "Gettysburg," and it too began to point to the blessings that would flow from a stalemate that continued through the winter.³³ The resolution and valor of the Russian armies and people became regular objects of praise. President Roosevelt summed up the general mood when he told his press conference on August 1 that the Soviet defense was "magnificent"—"better than any military expert of Germany thought it would be."³⁴

Even though they rejoiced in Germany's tribulations and paid tribute to the heroism of the Russian people, some interventionist circles still held to their abiding distrust in the Soviet government and were unwilling to gamble American supplies on the good faith of the Kremlin. The *New York Times* exemplified this stand. In a lengthy editorial on August 6, it continued to insist that the central issue was to "stop Hitler," not to "help Russia." Because of the critical shortage of supplies, the inherent logistical difficulties, and the "factor of good faith," it counseled

30. "No Blitz Oblige," *Time*, XXXVIII (August 4, 1941), 18.

31. July 28, 1941, p. 10.

32. July 29, 1941, p. 8.

33. Committee to Defend America, "Washington Office Information Letter," August 1, 1941 and August 7, 1941 (Nos. 29 and 30).

34. *New York Times*, August 2, 1941, p. 5.

that American aid be confined to such "proved friends" as Britain and China. The Russian front, it agreed, was of tremendous importance, but aid to these friends was actually a help to the Russians, and the *Times* was unable to find any assurance that Stalin would not again change partners and become "Hitler's *Gauleiter* in the East."

The conservatism of this approach to the war in Russia was by then being slowly but steadily eroded by an emerging hope that the ordeal of the Soviet Union might become America's salvation. Throughout 1940 and 1941, it must be emphasized, the Roosevelt policies had been publicly defended as necessary measures to keep the war from America. Lend-Lease had been justified as a contribution to the defeat of the enemy—Germany—by supporting the war efforts of Britain and her allies. It was offered as a method of thrusting American power into the scales while stopping short of the ultimate step of full belligerency. There can be little doubt that the general public was persuaded that America's interests and ideals pointed to the wisdom of helping to further the defeat of Germany. In early March of 1941 the American Institute of Public Opinion reported that, on the basis of its surveys, only 23 per cent of the American people "definitely disapproved" of the Lend-Lease Act.³⁵ On May 6 it reported that 76 per cent of the people felt that aid definitely should be sent to England, even at the risk of war.³⁶ The Fortune Poll indicated in June that 79.5 per cent of the public agreed that the U.S. was actually in the war "for all practical purposes," and the Office of Public Opinion Research found a steady decline, from December of 1940 on into the fall and winter of 1941, in the number of Americans who still held to the belief that America's staying out of the war was more important than German defeat—a conclusion corroborated in data released by the American Institute of Public Opinion.³⁷ But the opinion polls also indicated that the public was profoundly reluctant to accept the consequences of its own beliefs. Late in June, in the wake of a chain of British defeats that spring, and with a consensus of expert opinion holding that the Russians could not long survive, the AIPO still found that 77 per cent of the people thought that the U.S. should not enter the war.³⁸ Even allowing for inaccuracies in these figures, the evi-

35. Cantrill (ed.), *Public Opinion, 1935-1946*, p. 410.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 976.

37. *Ibid.*, pp. 974, 975. The OPOR reported that the percentage believing it most important to keep out of war declined from 41 on December 11, 1940, to 28 on November 19, 1941; and the AIPO measured the decline during a comparable period from 40 to 32 per cent. See also the tabulations in "Gallup and Fortune Polls: Part Two, The War in Europe and the Far East," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, VI (1942), 151.

38. Cantrill (ed.), *Public Opinion, 1935-1946*, p. 976; and "Gallup and Fortune Polls: The War in Europe," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, V (1941), 680.

dence is overwhelming that President Roosevelt acted upon the premise that the public was in this state of mind.

This condition appears to offer the most plausible explanation for the relative complacency with which the American public and Congress reacted to the President's decision to send aid to Soviet Russia. The political implications of a major aid effort for Russia's benefit were still unknown in the period here under discussion, and serious risks seemed inherent in such an undertaking. In Congress, Senator Pepper was still the only outspoken advocate of lend-lease aid for the Russians. There were, nevertheless, during the course of foreign policy debates in late July and early August, two significant lines of thought expressed pertaining to the German-Soviet war that had important implications for American policy toward the U.S.S.R. The first was the respect and admiration that began to be voiced for Russia's heroic defense. The second was the expression of the hope that the Russian front would provide the means of insuring a German defeat without a commitment of American troops to the battlefields of Europe. To these Congressional discussions of the Russian war attention may now be turned.

On August 5 two foremost spokesmen for the majority party and the administration took the floor of the House and the Senate and spoke at some length on the subject of the war in Russia. The occasion in the House was a debate over a bill to authorize the requisition of property for defense purposes—an issue prompted by the international crisis but hardly related in any direct sense to the conflict between Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany. The bill was brought to the floor for debate by Representative Adolph J. Sabath, of Chicago, the "dean" of the House, chairman of the powerful Rules Committee and of the Democratic Steering Committee. In a few short sentences Sabath summarized the outstanding provisions of the bill in question and then abruptly launched into a remarkable and lengthy speech on the war in Russia and American policies toward that struggle.

Beginning his declamation by voicing regret that isolationists had seen fit to criticize President Roosevelt's expression of sympathy and support for the Soviet Union, Sabath declared:

Russia is not at this time fighting for Bolshevism. [The Russians] . . . are fighting for their land and for their country. Because at this time they happen to have a form of government that we do not approve is no reason why we should take an unfriendly attitude.

We should leave to the Russian people the kind of government they want, because I firmly believe that shortly they will have a democratic form of government that will give the great people of Russia the liberty, freedom, and

justice that they have sought for centuries. Today, I repeat, they are not fighting for Bolshevism. . . .

On the basis of this assertion, Sabath then said to the House: "Therefore, I hope that in the future, instead of offending a people fighting against Hitlerism, that we will applaud their brave, courageous, and honest efforts in behalf of the democracies of the world."³⁹

The Democratic leader then proceeded to offer a defense for Soviet foreign policies of the recent past.

. . . I am just as much opposed to communism and some of the acts of the Communists as anyone in this House, but I know that gradually, within the last year and a half, a change has taken place in that great country and that change is for more freedom and a better life.

I was at all times satisfied, even if Stalin was obliged to yield to Hitler, that he was not desirous of doing so, but was compelled to do so by reason of the fact that Russia at that time was not prepared to resist or defend itself against the most powerful Nazi mechanized army and air force, and what he has done any man who had the interests of his country at heart would have done to gain time and prepare, and this he succeeded in doing. The Nazis, Fascists, and appeasers continually assail and attack him and his cause, and some say that he has double-crossed the loving and God-fearing Adolph Hitler. Please understand, I am not defending his cause, but it is manifestly unfair to assail and attack him and indirectly approve of Hitler's murderous and atrocious activities. . . .⁴⁰

It was not merely admiration for Russian bravery, understanding for Stalin's foreign policies, or the undefined "changes" over recent months that were supposedly bringing the Russian people nearer to a realization of democracy which prompted Sabath to endorse the President's policies. Though he agreed that American power should always be on the side of "international good citizenship," he apparently rested the burden of his argument upon one pivotal assertion: "I believe," he said, "that by the defeat of Hitler by Great Britain, with the aid of Russia and other countries, we will be saved in being forced to defend our freedom and liberty."⁴¹ At another point he stated the issue more explicitly. Referring to Hitler's ambitions for world conquest and to the reluctance of Americans to become directly involved in war, he announced:

For that reason I want to give to Great Britain and Russia, who are now fighting Hitler, all possible aid, which does not mean that we are helping communism, but that we are aiding Great Britain and thereby protecting

39. *Congressional Record*, LXXXVII, 6772-73.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 6774.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 6773.

ourselves. . . . Everyone who is sincere must concede that the defeat of Hitler by Great Britain and Russia will prevent our involvement.⁴²

It was significant that Sabath clothed his defense of aiding the Soviet Union with the robe of aid for Britain. Despite his defense of Soviet policies, despite his bland assurances that Russia was on the road to a system of democratic government, Sabath dealt rather cautiously with the question of American aid to the U.S.S.R. His remarks thereby gave singular emphasis to the political uncertainties associated with such a step. At one point he remarked:

I am satisfied that if proper aid is given to Russia that it will be much to our advantage, and I do not mean by that that we should donate to *them* to the extent that we have to Great Britain. Please remember that all Russia has asked or sought was the privilege of buying and paying for machinery, tools, and items which they need in their defense.⁴³

Either Sabath had been poorly informed by the administration regarding the scope of the aid commitment the Soviets had sought, or he was deliberately minimizing it. Whichever it was, it is striking that, in the face of the cumulative impact of the entire speech, he would not speak out for something in the nature of lend-lease aid to the Soviet Union.

That same August 5 witnessed some interesting comments on the Russian war in the Senate, made by the majority leader, Alben Barkley of Kentucky. Speaking in support of the military service extension resolution, Barkley discussed for a time the Russo-German conflict. He observed that, whatever the senators might think of the Soviet government, they would all agree that Hitler was the foremost danger and all would hope that the Russians would succeed in halting the Germans. Barkley then found some kind words to say in behalf of the Stalin regime—not a commonplace occurrence on the floor of the U.S. Senate. He referred to the struggle for power between Stalin and Trotsky, characterizing Trotsky as the advocate of world revolution. Stalin, on the other hand, had taken the position “that the Russian Government owed its first duty to the Russian people” and therefore concentrated on building the national economy and on removing the blight of illiteracy bequeathed by the tsars. In both these endeavors of the Stalin regime, Barkley said, much had been achieved.⁴⁴ At that point Barkley halted, passing on to other matters without touching directly upon the subject of U.S. relations with the Soviet Union.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 6775.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 6751.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 6774.

One can only hypothesize as to the timing and inspiration of these two speeches, delivered on the same day by two of the most influential Democrats in Congress. Barkley's comment appeared rather off-hand and formed only a portion of his speech in support of extending the period of compulsory military service. Yet, no less than Sabath's more forthright and prolonged discussion, it was certainly a conspicuous illustration of the direction of interventionist thought toward the Soviet Union and its war against Germany. Both speeches were prophetic of policy trends.

The isolationist camp was also affected in the development of its strategy by the unexpected holding power of the Russians. On the surface there was no perceptible change in their general attitude with reference to American policy toward the Russian war. The direct assaults upon the President's policy of aid, however, came almost exclusively from the far right of the isolationist forces in Congress. Representative Frederick C. Smith (R., Ohio) delivered a forceful attack on the President's policies in a speech broadcast over CBS on July 23. Characteristically, the main burden of his argument against helping the U.S.S.R. was that it would "operate strongly to encourage the further development of communism in this country" and that it would "have the effect of disarming the opposition which our people have been developing against communism."⁴⁵

Several days after this—on July 31—Congressman Stephen A. Day (R., Ill.), an extreme isolationist and ultra-conservative of the Martin Dies persuasion, also took to the air to deliver a blistering message entitled "Lend-Leasing for Atheism." Like Smith, he held aid to Russia as synonymous with promoting the cause of communism. He branded communism and Russia as menaces more deadly than Nazi Germany and put heavy stress on the atheism of Soviet ideology. At one point he openly called on Catholics to repudiate the President's policies.⁴⁶

Shortly after this, on August 5, Day introduced in the House a concurrent resolution which would have abrogated the President's authority under the Lend-Lease Act with reference to the Soviet Union.⁴⁷ The same week saw other conservative isolationists unleash their rhetoric against the President's support of the Russians—specifically, Woodruff (R.,

45. *Ibid.*, pp. A3601-2.

46. *Ibid.*, pp. A3709-10. See also Sydney Justin Harris, "Keep Them Out! III—Stephen A. Day of Illinois," *The Nation*, CLIV (June 20, 1942), 708-10. Day put himself in an embarrassing but richly deserved position later in 1941 by having a book, *We Must Save the Republic!*—a polemical anti-New Deal, anti-internationalist tract—published by Flanders Hall Co., a registered German agent controlled by George Viereck. See also Cole, *America First*, p. 118.

47. *Congressional Record*, LXXXVII, 6802.

Mich.),⁴⁸ Rich (R., Pa.),⁴⁹ and Hoffman (R., Mich.).⁵⁰ Woodruff inserted a petition and letter from Gerald L. K. Smith—of *The Cross and the Flag* fame and chairman of the Committee of One Million—demanding that the “defense effort . . . not be appropriated to the underwriting of atheistic communism and Stalin’s Russia.” The Reverend Mr. Smith announced that “religious people” had been “shocked beyond description” by the visit of Harry Hopkins to the Kremlin. And Congressman Hamilton Fish of New York, offended by the remarks of Sabath on August 5, rose to reply that the Russians were fighting “for communism and world revolution” and that the only desirable outcome for the struggle on the steppes of Russia would be the mutual destruction of both antagonists.⁵¹

These attacks were impressive, but they hardly represented an organized, concerted effort to prevent any administration efforts in behalf of Russia. Day’s resolution, like its predecessors introduced by Tinkham and Knutson, quietly died in the recesses of the Foreign Affairs Committee. The vehemence with which the entire isolationist camp had denied any American interest in the war in Russia promptly after June 22, and the uncompromising manner in which they scorned the thought that Soviet Russia was deserving of American aid, make this absence of concerted opposition deserving of analysis.

It is true that extremists like Day and Tinkham had run ahead of developments in one respect. Lend-Lease had not been granted to the U.S.S.R., and any plans to do so had been denied by administration spokesmen. The presentation of Soviet aid as essentially the facilitating of Soviet purchasing operations did not present a vulnerable position to attack. However, a program had been placed before Congress by the administration that July which was indeed politically vulnerable. That was the request to extend the period of military service required of the men inducted into the armed forces under selective service. The request was premised upon the contention that a national emergency existed which forbade any indiscriminate dissolution of Army units. The opposition decided to combat this proposal with all the resources it could muster, and the continuation of the war in Russia supplied it with a powerful argument in its counterattack to the effect that the emergency had receded, rather than intensified. Certainly there was a correspondence in the exploitation of this argument and the relative apathy with which actions in support of the Soviet Union were received.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 6900.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 6457.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 6765.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 6775.

In the first place, the opposition to military service was a well-organized operation. An informal "non-interventionist committee" was formed in Congress, directed by Senators Taft and Wheeler. Taft told the press on July 22 that the group—then numbering over fifty members—had agreed "to oppose in every way any possible declaration of a national emergency." Since the group was not in accord as to the type of military training program that should be supported, he stated that Wheeler had been named chairman of a special committee "to draw up a policy." The only comment made by Taft on that occasion with reference to the German-Soviet war was to say merely that the group believed that the U.S. had to continue in resolute opposition to communism, notwithstanding the fact of Russia's struggle against Germany.⁵²

Not long after this interview—and when the debate over the draftees had ended—Walter Lippmann was expounding the thesis that the Russian war was the event which had induced the Republican Old Guard isolationists and their allies to attack the Army's request and to disregard the urgent interpositions of General Marshall. In a column written early in September, he averred: "They were able to make a political gamble on the probability, by no means a certainty in August or even today, that Russia will survive the season's campaign and will keep the bulk of Hitler's forces engaged for some time to come."⁵³ Such a political strategy as this, which seems corroborated in the legislative debates, made it an unpropitious time to attack policies formulated to encourage and support the Soviet Union.

Thus near the beginning of the Senate hearings, Chairman Reynolds (D., N.C.) interrupted General Marshall's testimony to insert an editorial from the *New York Daily News* arguing that the emergency had receded. It gave in evidence the increase in American defense production and the heavy German losses in Russia. Even if Russia collapsed, said the *News*, it would take considerable time for Hitler to recoup his strength sufficiently to strike at Britain, and in the meantime the U.S. and Britain would be gathering strength.⁵⁴ Thereafter this argument was frequently heard in the speeches of the opposition. It was voiced in the Senate by Tobey (R., N.H.),⁵⁵ Hiram Johnson (R., Calif.),⁵⁶ Wiley (R., Wis.),⁵⁷ and, of course, by Wheeler and Taft. In the House it was reiterated by

52. *New York Times*, July 23, 1941, p. 8.

53. *Washington Post*, September 4, 1941, p. 11.

54. Senate, Committee on Military Affairs, *Hearings on S.J. Res. 92 and S.J. Res. 93, Retention of Reserve Components and Selectees in Military Service Beyond Twelve Months*, 77th Cong., 1st Sess. (1941), pp. 35-36.

55. *Congressional Record*, LXXXVII, 6446.

56. *Ibid.*, pp. 6848-49.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 6848.

Jonkman (R., Mich.),⁵⁸ Chipperfield (R., Ohio),⁵⁹ Bender (R., Ohio),⁶⁰ and Robsion (R., Ky.).⁶¹ Seven of the nine Republicans on the House Military Affairs Committee signed a minority report on the measure in which this argument was a cardinal point. The minority report denied that the nation was in peril, referring to the improved position of Britain and to the fact that "Russia's well-trained and mechanized millions are sapping much of the strength of the German war machine." It went so far as to quote Winston Churchill to the effect that the Soviet armies were manifesting "magnificent strength and courage" and concluded that there was no ground for the assumption that the national position had worsened.⁶²

Some isolationists had chosen the occasion to assail the administration for aiding the Communist regime of Stalin,⁶³ but the more significant facet of the opposition argument was this exploitation of the Russian front to belittle the administration's plea that the emergency had intensified. As Taft expressed it, because of the war in Russia and the German losses there, plus the progress made in American rearmament, the situation appeared "infinitely safer."⁶⁴ Senator Wheeler, whose role was a key one throughout the debates, on three occasions stated that he had no particular objection to sending supplies to the Soviet Union. After a speech deploring the shortage of training equipment in U.S. military posts, he remarked:

I have not any objection to giving it [military equipment] to other countries under present conditions, because I do not think this country is imperiled; but if Senators believe this country is imperiled and is about to be invaded, they cannot consistently say that we ought to give equipment to China and to Russia and to South America and to every other country on the face of the earth.⁶⁵

If these maneuvers against selective service extension de-emphasized the opposition to aid for Russia, it should be stressed that they were also consistent with several aspects of the isolationist response to the war in Russia. It will be recalled that, from June 22 onward, isolationist spokesmen had made much of the contention that Russia's entry into the conflict definitely relieved the pressure on Britain and the U.S., and they had not been disposed to dwell on the prospects of a Russian defeat. To

58. *Ibid.*, p. 6927.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 6953.

62. Committee on Military Affairs, *Declaring the Existence of a National Emergency, and for Other Purposes, Minority Views*, H. Rp. 117, 77th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 16.

63. Hiram Johnson did so in his speech cited above, as did Congressmen Hoffman (R., Mich.) and Sweeney (R., N.Y.). See *Congressional Record*, LXXXVII, 6952, 7037.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 6571.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 6940.

61. *Ibid.*, pp. 7004-5.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 6831.

have countenanced the sale of weapons to the Russians was not incompatible with the oft-expressed isolationist hope that the two dictatorships would mutually exterminate one another. Far less was heard in the 1941 selective service debates about the war in Russia than about the allegation that to retain the draftees was to violate the government's "contract" with them, but this political ramification of the war in Soviet Russia was of definite significance. It was Operation "Barbarossa" that provided the isolationists with the means of projecting a forceful argument to the effect that there was no immediate crisis confronting the nation.

Administration supporters answered these claims that the emergency had declined by emphasizing the uncertainties of the Soviet position and stressing the increased perils that Soviet collapse would produce. They also pointed to the renewed activity of Japan.⁶⁶ Again, however, Senator Pepper was the only member to speak out for some "timely lend-lease aid" to the U.S.S.R.⁶⁷

The entire episode was a harrowing one for the Roosevelt administration. By the narrowest of margins—one vote in the House—it secured the enactment of the resolution authorizing the retention of the draftees for six additional months. R. Douglas Stuart, Jr., of the national executive committee of America First, reflected the jubilation of the isolationist camp when he said:

The vote on draft extension in the House was the most encouraging thing that has happened in many a moon. . . .

As it turned out, the vote was a sharp rebuff to the Administration and a warning that Congress will not stand for war. The confidence and morale on the part of the members of Congress who share our point of view is infinitely higher than it has been in the past nine months.⁶⁸

It would be only logical to assume that this encounter—in the broader framework of the uncertain state of American public opinion and the circumspect attitude of the President toward that opinion—served to enhance the military importance of the Russian front to the objectives of the Roosevelt foreign policies.

66. See the remarks of Senators Hill (D., Ala.), Lee (D., Okla.), and Bailey (D., N. C.), *ibid.*, pp. 6682, 6873.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 6666.

68. From a letter of Stuart to Chester Bowles, quoted in Cole, *America First*, pp. 102-3.

VIII.

Preparations for the Moscow Conference: Supply and Distribution Problems

DEEPENING CRISIS IN RUSSIA

THE HOPEFUL reports brought from Moscow by Harry Hopkins contained, for all their confidence in Soviet defense, an emphasis upon the urgency of the Soviet supply program. German advances were making deep inroads into the war-making potential of the U.S.S.R., so that the continuation of Soviet defense was becoming increasingly dependent upon supplies from America and Britain.

Shortly after Hopkins' return, Russia's military situation began to deteriorate further, as the German offensive took on new momentum. In the north, the danger to Leningrad increased. On August 18 it was announced that Soviet forces had begun a withdrawal across the Dnieper River in the south, and the fall of Smolensk on the road to Moscow cast a further shadow of ominous portent. British authorities estimated that German occupation of the area west of the Dnieper would result in the loss of some 50 per cent of Soviet steel-making capacity, 60 per cent of its aluminum output, and comparable losses in other vital war potential. It was recognized that the Germans had still failed to achieve their cardinal objective—the destruction of the Soviet armies—but there were growing anxieties in both London and Washington that the remorseless German advance and the heavy manpower and material losses the Russians were sustaining might lead to a political collapse even if military catastrophe were averted. These anxieties led to various kinds of proposals to furnish evidence of support and encouragement to the Soviet government—such as a suggestion that the U.S. dispatch a group of engineers to ascertain what material and machinery would be needed to

replace Soviet industrial losses by building up the manufacturing centers beyond the Urals.¹

Although he refrained from such dramatic touches as this, Ambassador Steinhardt emphasized the gravity of the situation in his reports and pointed to the obvious importance of U.S. and British support if Russia were to be kept in the war. After the fall of Smolensk he cabled that, in his judgment, the Stalin government was "not likely to make peace with Germany so long as sufficient power of resistance remains to insure the grip of the government on the unoccupied areas of the country." The fall of Smolensk had been a blow to the morale of the Russian people, he stated, and he offered this advice: "I am persuaded that American and British support will have a very important bearing in strengthening their morale and in shaping Stalin's policy, such as tending to discourage him from accepting any overtures which Japan might make."²

In the first week of September, with the situation still worsening, Prime Minister Churchill felt some foreboding on the matter. On the evening of September 4 he and Foreign Minister Eden held a long and depressing interview with Ambassador Maisky. The Ambassador called to deliver a message from Stalin which painted a bleak picture of Soviet losses and complained of the "impunity" with which the Germans had been able to transfer numerous fresh divisions to the East. Over the past week, Stalin said, the stabilization of the front had broken down. The only solution, he wrote, was a second front in France or the Balkans, plus insuring to the U.S.S.R. thirty thousand tons of aluminum by the start of October and a "monthly minimum" of four hundred aircraft and five hundred tanks beginning by that date. Maisky, after delivering the message, elaborated upon its contents. He spoke in "bitter terms" of the fact that Russia had for eleven weeks borne the brunt of the war. Churchill was sympathetic, until he detected an "underlying air of menace" in the Ambassador's comments. With great feeling he said to Maisky: "We never thought our survival was dependent on your action either way. Whatever happens, and whatever you do, you of all people have no right to make reproaches to us."³

These dreary proceedings prompted Churchill to send this message to President Roosevelt:

The Soviet Ambassador brought the subjoined message to me and Eden last night, and used language of vague import about the gravity of the oc-

1. I have used in this connection two unsigned memoranda prepared in the first week of September, contained in the Washington Office Files of the Harriman Mission.

2. Telegram, Steinhardt to Hull, August 17, 1941 (740.0011 EW1939/14025).

3. Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, pp. 456-57.

casion and the turning-point character which would attach to our reply. Although nothing in his language warranted the assumption, we could not exclude the impression that they might be thinking of separate terms. The Cabinet have thought it right to send the attached reply. Hope you will not object to our references to possible American aid. I feel the moment may be decisive. We can but do our best.⁴

From Moscow, within a few days, there were vouchsafed some reassurances respecting any peace negotiations between the U.S.S.R. and Germany. British Ambassador Cripps managed to convey to the Kremlin the uneasiness felt on that score, and was told by Stalin that the Soviet Union always "keeps its engagements" and would, if necessary, continue to prosecute the war from east of the Volga. These tidings were relayed by Cripps to the American Embassy.⁵

All this prompted the U.S. to do what it could to ease the pressure and afford to the U.S.S.R. such relief as it could. First and foremost in this regard was the supply question. From Argentia had gone a sweeping pledge of combined Anglo-American efforts to open their arsenals to the Soviet Union, a climactic fulfillment, as it were, of the general agreement reached by Roosevelt and Churchill just before the advent of Operation "Barbarossa." Shortly after his return to Washington the President released a second comprehensive list of articles for export to the U.S.S.R.⁶ The primary task was the calculation of a major long-range supply program, which could be jointly presented to Stalin by U.S. and British officials at the projected conference in Moscow. This entailed a complex programming of American and British production over future months and major readjustments of previously agreed upon distribution schedules. Leaving aside this involved story for the moment, attention may first be devoted to other endeavors in behalf of the Soviet government during August and September, as the supply negotiations within the American government, and between London and Washington, were in progress.

Finland's Predicament

Stalin had complained bitterly, in his message delivered to Churchill on September 4, of the "increase in activities of the twenty Finnish divisions" deployed against the Soviet Union. The thorny issue of Finland's participation in the *Drang nach Osten* was one that the U.S. hesi-

4. *Ibid.*, p. 460.

5. Telegram, Steinhardt to Hull, September 13, 1941 (740.0011 EW1939/15040).

6. Britain was during this time making every exertion to rush aid to the Soviets. See Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, pp. 384-88, 458-60, for some figures. British aid exceeded by a wide margin the exports from the United States.

tated to become involved in, for obvious reasons. It was also obvious that considerable relief might be rendered to the hard-pressed Russians if a termination of that second "northern war" could be effected. Of Churchill, Stalin made surly demands for action against the Finns, and the Prime Minister, anxious to do what he could, asked Roosevelt for help.

Sometime early in August the Soviet Union had authorized the U.S. to make it known to Finland that the Kremlin was prepared to make peace, even if it should "involve the making of territorial concessions by the Soviet Union to Finland." Under-Secretary Welles so informed the Finnish Minister to the U.S. on August 18, immediately after his return from Argentina. Unfortunately, Helsinki never responded.⁷

In his message to Stalin on September 5, Churchill agreed to ask the U.S. to use its influence to get Finland disengaged. In response to this, the President suggested to Hull in a memorandum of September 6 that he discreetly make it known to the Finnish Minister that, while the American public was pleased that Finland had recovered the territories taken from it in 1939-40, it could not but be alienated if the Finns crossed their former boundaries and enlisted in Germany's campaign for territorial conquest. The cautious Hull was unable to bring himself to make such a veiled warning.⁸ It is most unlikely that it would have achieved any purpose, at any rate, for Finland was by then becoming dependent upon Germany even for necessary food supplies. Having harnessed themselves to the German war chariot, the Finns were inexorably drawn onward to the precipice. The U.S. was left to deal with the delicate situation as best it could.

Lend-Lease Plans for the Development of the Persian Corridor

A happier outcome attended the Allied venture in Iran, undertaken with direct reference to the provision of supplies to the Soviet Union from the U.S. and Britain. The joint occupation of Iran by British and Russian forces began late in August and opened new opportunities for the Soviet supply enterprise.

By mid-summer German forces in the south of Russia had swept past Odessa toward the port of Rostov on the Sea of Azov. It was obvious that the Germans were aiming for the Caucasus. The breaking of that barrier would have exposed the entire Middle East, with its vital oil fields and the potentially important supply corridor linking the Soviet Union with the Persian Gulf. The situation was made more dangerous

7. Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, pp. 826-27.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 828-29; and *Foreign Relations, 1941*, I, 61-64.

by the fact that the ruling Shah of Iran was openly pro-German. The British and Soviet governments thereupon agreed to occupy Iran, and on August 25 their forces crossed the frontiers. At first, the Roosevelt administration was embarrassed by the operation against Iran, but public opinion seemed favorable and the transport opportunities that it afforded to the Soviet aid program could hardly be overlooked.⁹

The British made known their intent to develop to the fullest extent the antiquated Iranian State Railway. Particularly during the winter months, the Persian Corridor seemed to provide the most satisfactory of all supply routes into the Soviet Union. Harry Hopkins, diligently seeking to do all he could to fulfill the commitments to the U.S.S.R., cabled to Churchill on September 4 asking how the U.S. could help in the project. With this warrant, the Prime Minister moved rapidly. On the sixth, he had Beaverbrook cable both Hopkins and Harriman, advising them that freight cars and locomotives were needed immediately. The same day, the North American Supply Council was instructed by London to make formal application to the Division of Defense Aid Reports for lend-lease help, "emphasizing the needs of the ISR [Iranian State Railway] as the most pressing transportation requirement in the entire Middle East." The lend-lease office was informed that the British objective was to raise the capacity of the ISR from two hundred to two thousand tons per day and to raise the capacity of Iranian highways to twelve thousand tons per month. The response in Washington was prompt. On September 10 Brigadier General G. R. Spalding, head of the Shipping and Storage Section of the Division of Defense Aid Reports, made a formal recommendation that the ISR be made an approved project under lend-lease assistance to Great Britain.¹⁰

The War Department was by this time preparing to put into operation plans it had been developing since May to assist the British in the Middle East—specifically, the establishment of supply and maintenance depots in the region. This neat convergence of Middle Eastern planning resulted in a presidential directive to the Secretary of War, on September 13, authorizing the provision of lend-lease aid to Britain in that area. The place of the Persian supply corridor in this broad development is pointed up in a memorandum sent to Hopkins by Brigadier General S. P. Spalding, head of the Production Division of the lend-lease office. It stated:

9. Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, pp. 801ff.; and Motter, *The Persian Corridor and Aid to Russia*, pp. 9-10.

10. Motter, *The Persian Corridor and Aid to Russia*, p. 15.

The entrance of Russia into the war has given the Iranian theater urgent priority. The demands of the new theater are tremendous—250,000 ship tons of railroad material in one project, more than the total shipments to the Middle East to date, requiring 50 to 75 ships, with the distance so great that only three trips a year can be made. A big automotive project is superimposed on the railroad project. Diversions of material hitherto destined for Egypt are being made to the new theater.¹¹

Despite the energy and enthusiasm with which the Persian Corridor project was promoted, the monumental transportation obstacles in the way of shipping significant quantities of aid to the Soviet Union remained substantially unaltered for many months to come. The road to Russia was a long one and a difficult one. The Russians were insisting throughout that summer and fall—and Stalin had made the point to Hopkins during the latter's flying visit to Moscow—that the Arctic and White Sea ports provided the most promising avenues of approach, both in terms of distance and available facilities. To this the Americans and British agreed, but they found that the Russians had greatly overestimated their ability to keep Archangel and lesser ports in this region free from ice during the long northern winter, and they had also overestimated the port and terminal capacities of their Arctic depots. The Russians asserted that they could handle 500,000 tons of cargo monthly, 270,000 through the Arctic and White Sea ports, 224,000 at Vladivostok, and 6,000 through Iran. American officials found 90,000 tons to be more realistic, and the British estimate was as low as 60,000.¹² Aside from ice and port capacity difficulties, the northern route, although the best immediately available, was extremely vulnerable to German air and naval assault from Norwegian bases, and its use was certain to entail costly losses.

For this reason emphasis was placed upon the development of the Iranian corridor. Although it proved impossible to make any significant progress in developing this route during 1941,¹³ the keen interest and ready response which the British found in Washington for the Iranian project that September was illustrative of the growing significance of the aid to Russia program. Particularly noteworthy is the oblique manner in which that policy was put into effect. As the historian of the Persian corridor has put it: "The plain fact is that aid to Russia was necessarily

11. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

12. Leighton and Coakley, *Global Logistics and Strategy, 1940-1943*, p. 114. These authors give a comprehensive account of the steps taken to meet these transport problems during 1942-43 at pp. 551ff.

13. Twenty-eight ships left the U.S. with Soviet lend-lease supplies in October and November of 1941. Of these only one was routed to the Persian Gulf. Nineteen sailed for the Arctic ports and eight for Vladivostok. See *ibid.*, p. 114.

being set up as a part of aid to Britain." This was true in that the ISR—and the entire Iranian transport program—were made projects under British lend-lease operations. The President's directive of September 13 referred only to British needs, and the Secretary of War, in describing the activities to Secretary Hull, spoke only of "contemplated British operations."¹⁴ Everything pointed to one outstanding fact: the sheer physical and transport difficulties of supplying the Soviet Union were matched, in the judgment of American officials, by political difficulties equally formidable.

THE PRESIDENT'S DIRECTIVE OF AUGUST 30

The vital constituent of the President's policy decisions with reference to the Soviet Union was the pledge that American aid in substantial proportions would be furnished. The joint message to Stalin from the Atlantic Conference had spoken in terms of a far-reaching tripartite division of resources. This opened for the President three interrelated lines of endeavor after his return to Washington. First, on the basis of projected production schedules, there had to be a determination made in Washington of the quantities of supplies that could be transferred to Russia over future months. This could then be worked out in greater detail with the British, who were engaged in a similar task, who were already pledging generous quantities of aid, and in concert with whom the U.S. could then present at Moscow a specific commitment of supplies. Second, since the long-range program was envisaged as an undertaking of major proportions, it was necessary to find a suitable means through which it could be financed and authorized. This entailed, third, the consolidation of ample Congressional and public endorsement for the provision of large quantities of American materials for the U.S.S.R. on a basis other than cash procurement.

During the interim period of the Hopkins mission and the Atlantic conference, the Soviet aid program was in an ambiguous state. On August 2 a first formal commitment had been made to the U.S.S.R. in the notes exchanged between the State Department and the Soviet Embassy, but this was a highly limited engagement, representative of the cautious first steps taken to send supplies to the U.S.S.R. It was clear at this point that changes would be wrought once Hopkins had returned and made his report to the President. Pending that, there was little to be done of a basic policy character, though the White House was exerting great pressure in its efforts to send all possible supplies to Russia by October 1.

14. Motter, *The Persian Corridor and Aid to Russia*, p. 15.

During this interim period, the negotiating behavior of the Soviet representatives in Washington presented a pattern of conduct markedly at variance with the congenial candor to which Hopkins had been privy at the Kremlin.

On August 2 General Burns convened the newly created three-power committee for its first—and only—meeting. Burns informed Oumansky and Jean Monnet, the British representative, that the committee's functions could not be clarified until Hopkins returned but that it could consider Soviet requests and then recommend measures for the consideration of the British and American governments. Oumansky was restless and belligerent. He insisted that the group be given U.S. production figures and that, from those schedules, it proceed to discuss allocation item by item. In strident tones he argued for the primacy of the eastern front and demanded of Monnet all manner of statistics and estimates so that the capacities of the British war effort could be gauged. Consistency did not deter him from adding that though the Soviet government would answer all necessary questions pertaining to its own aid requests, statements of need made by each country should be accepted by other countries.¹⁵

Thereafter Oumansky continued on his rounds in Washington, broadcasting his disappointment with the scope of American aid. Accompanied by General Golikov, he called on Secretary Hull on August 4. In that sober and earnest presence Oumansky was on his best behavior, but he made his point, and Hull promised to "redouble" his efforts "to aid in speeding delivery" of needed weapons.¹⁶ This was Hull's first day in his office since his departure for White Sulphur Springs on June 23, and his attitude on aiding Russia apparently continued to be that expressed on the day of the German invasion.

To Secretary of the Interior Ickes, Oumansky was less restrained. He and Golikov called on Ickes the afternoon of August 8, and there commented sarcastically upon the paucity of weapons actually obtained—contrasting, for example, the 3,000 pursuit planes asked for with the 147 released by that date. Ickes apparently made no effort to explain the sacrifice that the 147 Curtiss P-40's represented. Instead, he suggested to his visitors that they might bring more pressure to bear upon American officials by way of the British and gave it as his opinion that the U.S. "ought to come pretty close to stripping" itself to supply Britain and Russia. Ickes did bring up the continued refusal of the Russians to

15. An account of the meeting is given in a memorandum in the OLLA, Russia File. The function and purpose of the three-power committee were never clarified, since the decisions taken at the Atlantic Conference made it superfluous.

16. Hull, *Memoirs*, II, 974.

permit American observers at the front. His visitors were "embarrassed" and Golikov promised to wire Stalin about the matter—a standard reply by that time.¹⁷

However modest the first releases of supplies for the U.S.S.R., pursuant to the President's order of July 21 to the Division of Defense Aid Reports, they were of sufficient quantity to entail sacrifices not taken lightly by many American production and military authorities. From the beginning there were some vigorous dissents. Illustrative of these was the protest made by OPM Director Knudsen against the release of 1,200 tons of aluminum and some aircraft industry machine tools to Russia on the first supply lists. He pointed out that the diversion of those materials would result in serious detriment to the heavy bomber production program. In fact, shortly after the President's departure for the Atlantic Conference, Knudsen bluntly wrote to Wayne S. Coy, the interim expeditor of Soviet aid, that he would not give his approval to their export until he had taken the matter up directly with the President.¹⁸ It may be noted in passing that Oumansky's disposition did not make any easier the task of American officials who had the responsibility of determining what the Russians could be permitted to obtain.

President Roosevelt returned from Argentina determined to raise the targets on Soviet aid and to make of it a long-range supply operation. In the broad design of national policy he envisaged the maintenance of the Russian front as a matter of "paramount importance." His decision in this respect coincided with the far-reaching production and military planning then in progress in Washington which resulted, in September, in the famous Victory Program. This program was a statement of the over-all requirements which the attainment of victory would place upon the resources of the U.S. Many individuals had shared the responsibility for its initiation—May, Knudsen, Batt, and others in the OPM; Stimson, Patterson, and numerous other officials, civil and military, in the War Department; and British officials, such as the officers of the North American Supply Council, had also been instrumental in setting the wheels in motion.¹⁹ The official authorization for undertaking such studies came in a directive from the President to the War and Navy Departments on July 9, which called for them to explore "at once the overall production re-

17. Ickes, *Secret Diary*, III, 594-95.

18. *Industrial Mobilization for War*, I, 131.

19. A detailed account of the Victory Program from the vantage-point of the Army, and in many respects the best of available studies, is in Watson, *Chief of Staff*, pp. 331ff. Valuable also is the material in *Industrial Mobilization for War*, I, 121-40. On the part played by British officials, see H. Duncan Hall, *North American Supply (History of the Second World War, United Kingdom, Civil Series)*. London: H.M.S.O. and Longmans, Green and Co., 1955), pp. 322ff.

quirements required to defeat our potential enemies." Actually, the resulting reports went much further than a mere statement of production goals. As General Gerow of the War Plans Division observed, the U.S. "would be unwise to assume that . . . it could defeat Germany simply by outproducing her."²⁰ The Victory Program went considerably beyond what the President had in mind and contained also a detailed strategic estimate of actual military operations that the defeat of Germany and its allies would demand.

Soviet supply needs did not, of course, enter into the premises upon which these Victory Program calculations were made. The U.S. Army planners were uncertain—indeed, doubtful—of Soviet prospects against the German onslaught, and Russian aid requirements were at this point indeterminate for that and a variety of other reasons. The program was centered upon British needs so far as defense aid was concerned, and, in fact, the strategic concept of the program was essentially an extended version of the ABC₁ war plans drawn up in the Anglo-American staff conferences of January-March of that year. Nevertheless, the practical importance of the Victory Program planning to the Soviet aid program was significant: it meant that an over-all estimate of production and delivery schedules would be available into which the Soviet aid requirements, as determined by the President, could be fitted.

On August 30, as the Victory Program studies were nearing completion, the President issued a directive to Secretary of War Stimson ordering immediate preparation of a list of supplies that could be committed to the U.S.S.R. for delivery by June 30, 1942. This directive, which put into effect the arrangements made at Argentia, sharply brings out the President's own thoughts as to the importance of the Russian front. Making no mention whatever of the earlier directives for the preparation of over-all production requirements, it ordered that the distribution of output to the end of fiscal 1942 be re-evaluated, so as to take into account the provision of supplies on a large scale to the Soviet Union. The directive stated:

As you know, I recently sent Mr. Harry Hopkins to Moscow to inquire into Russian needs for munitions that might be obtained from American production, and to inform the U.S.S.R. that this Government is willing to help with such supplies to the extent of its ability.

As a result of that visit, and Mr. Hopkins' report to Mr. Churchill and myself, a suggestion was sent to the U.S.S.R. that a conference be held in Russia in the near future, to be attended by representatives of Russia, Great Britain and this country, to have as its objective the formulation of definite

20. Watson, *Chief of Staff*, p. 342.

munitions aid programs, to assist Russia in its war efforts and which might be supplied by Great Britain and the United States.

Russia has accepted that suggestion, and the representatives of the various countries are to meet in Russia by October 1, 1941.

I deem it to be of paramount importance for the safety and security of America that all reasonable munitions help be provided for Russia, not only immediately but as long as she continues to fight the Axis powers effectively. I am convinced that substantial and comprehensive commitments of such character must be made to Russia by Great Britain and the United States at the proposed conference.

It is obvious that early help must be given primarily from production already provided for. I desire that your Department working in cooperation with the Navy Department, submit to me by September 10 next your recommendations of distribution of expected United States production of munitions of war, as between the United States, Great Britain, Russia and the other countries to be aided—by important items, quantity time schedules and approximate values, for the period from the present time until June 30, 1942.

I also desire your general conclusions as to the over-all production effort of important items needed for victory, on the general assumption that the reservoir of munitions power available to the United States and her friends is sufficiently superior to that available to the Axis powers, to insure defeat of the latter.

The distribution of production from existing production after June 30, 1942, and the distribution of the Victory Program objectives will obviously have to be decided at a later date, in the light of the then existing circumstances.

After the above reports and recommendations are submitted, I propose to arrange with the Prime Minister of England for a conference of high military officials, for the purpose of discussing the above two recommendations, as well as the aid to be provided by England to Russia. In view of the date on which the conference is to be held in Russia, it is important that the recommendations resulting from this British conference reach me not later than September 20 next.

With the knowledge of these recommendations, and after further consultation with the Prime Minister of Great Britain, I will be able to instruct the mission going to Russia as to the aid which will be supplied by this country. Should adjustments to this program of assistance be necessary, they will be recommended to me by the mission to Russia, after due consultation with the Russians and the British on the spot.²¹

THE DISTRIBUTION DILEMMA

This sweeping directive placed before the civil and military authorities in the War Department a perplexing task. In one sense, this inclusion of

²¹ Roosevelt (ed.), *F. D. R.: His Personal Letters*, II, 1201-3. The text is also in Watson, *Chief of Staff*, pp. 348-49.

the U.S.S.R. in the list of recipients of American aid did not raise a novel problem. It did, however, further complicate an already trying situation. Particularly, since the enactment of lend-lease, the War Department had been struggling to find a workable formula which would allow for a distribution of equipment and munitions consonant with the policy of defense aid and which would also cause the least interference with the fulfillment of Army task force and training requirements. Since the production of munitions was not sufficient to meet in full the requirements of either during 1941, the magnitude of the problem is evident.

Shortly after the outbreak of the German-Soviet war, the Army had arrived at a tentative arrangement which seemed to provide a reasonable basis of procedure in the matter, if given sufficient flexibility. First suggested by Colonel Henry S. Aurand, Chief of the Requirements and Distribution Branch, G-4, the arrangement was that 20 per cent of the monthly production of various types of equipment should be allocated for transfer under defense aid operations. The remaining 80 per cent would be retained, until U.S. requirements under the basic war plan, Rainbow 5, had been achieved, at which time a more substantial allocation for defense aid could be effected. With modifications, this had been approved on July 1 by General Marshall. Applying this 80-20 formula, G-4 then had prepared an "Availability List" for transfers of equipment to foreign governments through June 30, 1942, which gave to Britain and to China a tentative schedule of what deliveries they could anticipate.²²

In submitting this plan to the Chief of Staff, Colonel Aurand had noted that the 20 per cent was "subject to arbitrary revision upwards by agencies higher than the War Department."²³ The agency in question was the White House itself. Shortages of equipment in its training programs, and in the meeting of equipment needs of task and field forces, had been the inevitable consequence faced by the Army in the diversion of supplies to Britain and other recipients of U.S. aid. The Army did not oppose the policy of defense aid, to be sure, but the prevailing view in the War Department could be fairly described as one that considered the President erring toward the side of generosity in releasing equipment to Britain. Perhaps the crux of the situation was that the President, guided by the exigencies of politics as he was constrained to be, assigned higher relative priority to defense aid than to a prompt fulfillment of the Army's requirements as shaped by the basic war plan. Furthermore, Secretary Stimson and many of his associates deplored what they re-

22. Leighton and Coakley, *Global Logistics and Strategy, 1940-1943*, pp. 92-94.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 93.

garded as the highly unsystematic fashion in which the President acted on questions of distribution of munitions and equipment.

These considerations had stimulated a consensus among the military planners that there was a growing need for a central organization which would be empowered to oversee the distribution of military equipment between the U.S. and nations receiving defense aid, so as to insure that such distribution was consistent not only with planned production schedules but with strategic plans and policies as well. The Army-Navy Joint Board was suggested as the logical group to cope with such a problem—an arrangement especially attractive to the military. General Marshall agreed to this suggestion and on August 26 sent to General Burns a draft of an executive order, for which he requested presidential approval, that would have conferred such authority. The proposed order would have charged the Joint Board with responsibility to recommend to the President policies and priorities for the control of "the distribution among the United States and friendly powers, of munitions of war produced or controlled by the United States."²⁴

It is of interest that this proposal should have gone to the White House at a time when the ramifications of a Soviet aid program upon Army plans and needs were being given earnest consideration. No doubt aware of the presidential lecture given to Secretary Stimson at the Cabinet meeting of August 1 on the importance of Soviet aid, and probably anticipating what was to come when Hopkins returned to Washington from Moscow and Argentina, War Department officials had held a series of meetings during the week of the Atlantic Conference on the subject of Soviet supply. At these meetings, held in the office of Assistant Secretary John J. McCloy on August 9, 10, and 11, the Army viewpoint was presented to the President's expediter of Soviet aid, Wayne Coy. The predisposition of the military authorities was one that regarded Soviet chances of survival as very slim indeed. Accordingly, they continued to believe that the best means of assisting the Russians was to deliver on the aid commitments to Britain, since these commitments had been the major premises in planning the defense aid program and could generally be met without injecting new disruptions into delivery schedules. If the decision were to aid the Soviets directly—beyond the "token releases" and other arrangements made earlier that month—then the Army viewpoint, Coy was told, was that no munitions could be consigned to the Russians

²⁴. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 96.

"without a prior release by the British of materials allocated to them." This principle carried the endorsement of the Chief of Staff.²⁵

Such releases were obviously going to be required by the Soviet program, as even Prime Minister Churchill's memoranda on the subject that same week recognized, but the point that the Army authorities wanted to make was their consensus that further postponements in Army objectives should be avoided. Presidential assistant Coy's reply to this was that, while the acute shortages facing the Army were understood and recognized, the situation was going to require that additional materials would probably have to go to the Soviets over and above transfers from British allocations. Probably from this point onward the War Department accepted, if it did not concur in, the necessity for reviewing its allocation programs in the light of the President's views. It is of interest to note that on August 14 G-4 produced a staff study recommending the release to the Russians of 1,000 Thompson sub-machine guns with 1,000,000 rounds; 30,000 Enfields with 3,000,000 rounds; 27,000 100-pound bombs; and 1,000 500-pound bombs.²⁶ While important, all of this really did little more than skirt the edges of the basic problems involved in Soviet supply.

It is not here suggested that there was necessarily any direct and immediate connection between this series of meetings in McCloy's offices and the proposal in late August to centralize the planning of weapons distribution in the Joint Board, set forth in General Marshall's communication to the White House on the twenty-sixth of that month. Certainly since the inauguration of the lend-lease program the military authorities had very naturally sought to put the distribution of military aid upon a more systematic basis and to link the distribution of weapons production to strategic plans. These developments in August point up an over-all policy disposition in the War Department which was reluctant to agree to the sacrifice of deeply felt Army needs to an expanded program of defense aid to the Soviet Union. Furthermore, the fact that the President refused to approve of the proposal of General Marshall relating to the Joint Board seems to have been related to his determination to raise the sights on aid to Russia and his dissatisfaction with performance on the Russian program to that date. As two Army historians have suggested:

25. Motter, *The Persian Corridor and Aid to Russia*, p. 22; and Coakley, *The Army and Early Lend-Lease Operations*, MS.

26. Coakley, *The Army and Early Lend-Lease Operations*, MS. The Enfields and the ammunition thereafter were deleted from this list because of previous commitments to Britain, but the remainder was approved by General Marshall and released under an exchange contract as "surplus" under the Act of June 28, 1940.

The President's refusal was a re-affirmation of his determination to maintain the reins of control in his own hands and not to delegate too wide powers to the military agencies. The emergence of a new claimant for aid—the Soviet Union—and the President's desire to exercise close personal supervision over the development of a Soviet program may well have influenced this decision.²⁷

This would appear to be an eminently justifiable appraisal of the situation, for the President was certainly aware of the hesitancy and reluctance of the War Department to gamble precious armaments on a strange new ally.

This is not to say that the military authorities were opposed in principle to a policy of aid to Russia. They were keenly aware of the tremendous military asset that the maintenance of the front in Russia presented to the U.S. This is forcefully illustrated in certain portions of the strategic estimates approved by the Joint Board early in September as a portion of the Victory Program. A lengthy document on "Major Military Policy," approved by General Marshall and Admiral Stark, included this statement relative to the Soviet Union:

The maintenance of an active front in Russia offers by far the best opportunity for a successful land offensive against Germany, because only Russia possesses adequate manpower, situated in favorable proximity to the center of German military power. For Russia, ground and aviation forces are the most important. Predictions as to the result of the present conflict in Russia are premature. However, were the Soviet forces to be driven even beyond the Ural Mountains, and were they there to continue an organized resistance, there would always remain the hope of a final and complete defeat of Germany by land operations. The effective arming of Russian forces, both by the supply of munitions from the outside and by providing industrial capacity in the Volga Basin, or to the east of the Ural Mountains, would be one of the most important moves that could be made by the Associated Powers.²⁸

Elsewhere in that same document, it should be noted, was the assertion that the retention by the Soviet Union of eastern Siberia was "necessary" to the restraining of Japan.

Yet the Army did not fully share the growing confidence felt by Roosevelt and Hopkins in Soviet military strength. The above quoted estimate went no further than to say that predictions in that regard were "premature," but the War Plans Division of the General Staff continued to be skeptical of Soviet chances. From Moscow the military attaché,

27. Leighton and Coakley, *Global Logistics and Strategy, 1940-1943*, p. 96.

28. Quoted in Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 417.

Major Yeaton, was still sending dispatches of a foreboding character,²⁹ and the final strategic estimate accompanying the Victory Program counseled that operational plans be such as to allow for the U.S.S.R.'s being defeated in Europe by July, 1942, and reduced thereby to "military impotence."³⁰

Certainly the Army's appreciation of the important advantages that would arise from continued Soviet resistance was balanced by a concern that over-ambitious aid commitments would jeopardize the strength of U.S. forces. General Marshall commented on September 10, with reference to the pressures for aid to Britain, Russia, China, and other belligerents: "While agreeing in general that we should aid where we can I believe that such broad statements may give the President an erroneous idea of the amount of aid we can offer and might lead to commitments which would seriously impair the efficiency of our own forces. . . ."³¹ To understand properly the military's viewpoint in these matters it should be borne in mind that the basic Army approach to strategic planning, as made explicit in the Victory Program, was one quite at variance with the concepts which seemed to be guiding the President. In contrast to the President's "arsenal of democracy" principle in 1941, which envisaged the U.S. role as one of contributing "munitions, transport and naval help," the Army believed—in Secretary Stimson's words—that the situation required early direct U.S. participation "in an avowed all-out military effort" against Germany. The Army leaders were convinced, as Stimson put it in a letter to the President on September 23, that "in default of such participation, the British and their allies cannot defeat Germany, and that the resistance of the United Kingdom cannot continue indefinitely no matter what industrial effort is put forth by us."³²

Having accepted this premise as the basis for military planning in the achievement of national objectives, the Army could hardly have accepted with placid resignation any program which involved a further postponement in the achievement of minimum force and equipment goals called for in the U.S. basic war plan. It was bound to regard such postponements as dangerous to the national security.

Finally, it is relevant to observe, with reference to this broad complex of problems involved in the dilemma of "dividing a deficiency," that the War Department's difficulties were not alleviated by the conduct of Am-

29. The Polish commander, General Anders, whose troops the Russians were ignoring and using to harvest crops, was quite close to Major Yeaton and seems to have been an important factor in the attaché's pessimism.

30. Watson, *Chief of Staff*, p. 354.

31. From a memorandum to Admiral Stark, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 350.

32. Quoted in Leighton and Coakley, *Global Logistics and Strategy, 1940-1943*, p. 133.

bassador Oumansky and his associates in Washington. The resentment felt over the Soviet attitude was stated very bluntly by General Marshall himself in a memorandum of August 29 to Secretary Stimson. Providing his superior with ammunition for use at the next Cabinet meeting, Marshall said:

In the first place our entire Air Corps is suffering from a severe shortage in spare parts of *all* kinds. We have planes on the ground because we cannot repair them

Mr. Oumansky and his Russian associates were informed of this situation

If any criticism is to be made in this matter, in my opinion it is that we have been too generous, to our own disadvantage, and I seriously question the advisability of our action in releasing the P-40's at this particular time. I question this even more when it only results in criticism, and I think the President should have it clearly pointed out to him that Mr. Oumansky will take everything we own if we submit to his criticisms³³

But whatever misgivings and apprehensions the Army might have felt, the August 30 directive of the President was unequivocal in instructing the preparation of distribution lists that would provide substantial allotments of munitions to the Soviet Union, so the War Department proceeded to that task.

The nature of the President's instructions clearly dictated that ground force material in excess of the tentative 20 per cent allotted to defense aid would have to be provided for and also that the thorny issue of aircraft allocations be opened anew. There was little choice but to establish a new basis for the calculation of the Army's own requirements. The decision was to proceed on the basis of having base and task forces fully equipped by June 30, 1942, but to meet only 50 per cent of the equipment needs of forces in training by that date. Through this postponement of Army objectives, and by the reduction of projected deliveries to the British, a substantial allocation of materials to the Soviet Union was made possible. It was estimated that by June 30, 1942, the Russians could be supplied with 152 90-mm. guns; 991 37-mm. antitank guns; 1,135 mortars; 20,000 submachine guns; 729 light and 795 medium tanks; 155,341 miles of field telephone wire; and other assorted items. The Air Corps also proposed to send to Russia during the same period 1,200 planes, all of which were to be diverted from British lend-lease contracts. On September 12

33. Quoted in Watson, *Chief of Staff*, p. 329.

Secretary Stimson submitted these estimates to the White House, as directed in the letter of August 30.³⁴

As the War Department was engaged in these studies, the Office of Production Management was at work preparing a similar list of articles for allocation to the Soviet Union, covering such items as raw materials, intermediate materials, and industrial equipment. The tribulations experienced by production officials were closely akin to those suffered in the War Department. Throughout the proceedings, which entailed some "exhaustive negotiations and heated arguments," the ominous turn of events on the Russian front beginning in late August added to the urgency of the situation. Churchill and Beaverbrook were in frequent communication with Hopkins, stressing the need for haste and informing him and the President of the rather tense state of Anglo-Soviet relations in the wake of the German offensives.³⁵

THE PRELIMINARY CONFERENCES IN LONDON

In the meantime, the White House had decided upon the composition of the U.S. delegation to the Moscow supply conference. As announced on September 3, the mission was to be headed by W. Averell Harriman and would include: Major General Burns of the lend-lease office; Major General George H. Brett, Chief of Air Corps; Admiral William H. Standley, former Chief of Naval Operations and recently an official in the OPM; and William M. Batt, deputy director of the OPM's Production Division.³⁶

On September 9 Hopkins was able to cable to Churchill that all work on the supply list was nearing completion and that, in response to Churchill's somber message of the fifth, the President was "convinced that substantial and comprehensive commitments should be made to Russia by Great Britain and the United States at the Moscow Conference." He also informed the Prime Minister of the August 30 directive to Stimson, of the similar instructions given to the OPM, and of the fact that the Victory Program statement was almost finished. With all this information at hand, he said, the President proposed that conferences begin in London on September 15, at which the U.S. and Britain could reach agreement on their combined efforts and then be prepared to inform the U.S.S.R. of a "definite" aid commitment. Hopkins concluded that, "in

34. Leighton and Coakley, *Global Logistics and Strategy, 1940-1943*, p. 99; and Winacker, *The Office of the Secretary of War Under Henry L. Stimson*, MS, I, 72-73.

35. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 384.

36. *Department of State Bulletin*, V (1941), 180.

the light of the Prime Minister's cable," it was hoped that the Moscow Conference could start by September 25 rather than October 1.³⁷

To all of this the Prime Minister readily agreed, and on September 15 the preliminary meetings opened in London. General Brett had been unable to join the American delegation and his place was taken by Lieutenant General Stanley D. Embick (Rtd.) as the senior military member. Major General James A. Chaney and other members of the U.S. Special Observer's Group in London also participated, and General Burns and Colonel Faymonville were present as lend-lease representatives. The British conferees were headed by Lord Beaverbrook and included representatives of the Imperial General Staff and the other delegates chosen to attend the Moscow meeting.

Difficulties emerged at the outset of the conference. Although the British recognized that deliveries of U.S. aid to them would necessarily be reduced in order to supply the Soviets, this did not alter the fact that—as Churchill put it—to the British Services these reductions were like “flaying off pieces of their skin.”³⁸ Because of a desire to have some means of regulating and cushioning themselves against the losses, and because of other axes the British had to grind, Beaverbrook first asked that Britain be vested with all responsibility for the conduct of the joint program of aid to Russia. His proposal was that the U.S. make over-all allocations directly to the United Kingdom and that from these, with American consultation and advice, Britain would make sub-allocations to the Soviet Union. The proposal met with a firm refusal. Harriman and Embick made clear the American position that U.S. authorities would make their own allocations directly to the U.S.S.R., that these would be in addition to the commitments made by Britain to Russia, and that the London conferences were to agree upon the specific offers of aid that each of the two nations could present in the form of “definite” pledges at Moscow.³⁹

With that British proposition vetoed, negotiations proceeded and new difficulties immediately presented themselves. At the suggestion of Harriman and Embick, the conference, was divided into sub-committees—ground, air, navy, raw materials and transport, with each of these groups to make detailed recommendations on what commitments should be made at Moscow. During the course of these meetings the British were distressed to find that not only were the Americans suggesting the alloca-

37. Telegram, Hull to Winant, from Hopkins to the Prime Minister, September 9, 1941 (861.24/633a).

38. Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, p. 457.

39. Leighton and Coakley, *Global Logistics and Strategy, 1940-1943*, p. 99.

tion to Russia of material they had anticipated, but that U.S. production schedules were considerably lower than they had expected. In virtually every category of ground munitions, for example, the British emphasized their own pressing need for greater quantities of the articles to be offered to the Soviet Union, and they held throughout for their own lend-lease allocations. As in the instance of Beaverbrook's proposal that Britain control the joint Soviet aid program, the British at length had to give in, but, as Beaverbrook expressed it in the meeting of September 17, the American supply offers were accepted but not agreed to. In fact, the British attached to the agreement a statement of additional quantities of the supplies which they desired from the U.S.⁴⁰

It was in the instances of tanks and aircraft that the differences became heated. The War Department schedules on Soviet aid, prepared at the President's behest earlier that month, entailed plans to deliver to the Soviets before June 30, 1942, 729 light tanks and 795 medium tanks. This meant, among other things, that deliveries of light tanks to Britain would be suspended during the first four months of 1942. As it was, the American schedules envisaged delivery of only 611 medium tanks to Britain in comparison to the 795 to the U.S.S.R. The British were "stunned" by all this, and Harriman had to cable back to Washington for instructions, reporting that on this point the discussions had become "acrimonious."⁴¹

As in most matters pertaining to Soviet aid, the President and Hopkins were kept in the closest touch with developments and personally made the basic decisions. The President's solution to the tank difficulty was summarily to order that tank production be doubled by June of 1942. This, naturally, led to complications in Washington. Army Ordnance, to execute the order, asked that the priority rating on tank production be raised from A-1-d to A-1-a, whereupon the Navy Department "objected violently" because of the effects such a revision might have on its shipbuilding program. The President's order received subsequent modification, but for the present Hopkins was able to cable Harriman that the tanks available for export would be considerably more than contained in the Army estimates taken to the London Conferences. British requirements were thus less severely reduced in the end, but the Army had serious misgivings about the arduous task the President had set for it. It was true that the British had great need of tanks and that they had for some time counted upon receiving a greater proportion of U.S. production. Yet the U.S. Army had also had to engage in some painful flailing of its own flesh. The tank allotments originally offered

40. *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100; and Coakley, *The Army and Early Lend-Lease Operations*, MS.

41. Leighton and Coakley, *Global Logistics and Strategy, 1940-1943*, p. 100.

at London entailed delays in the equipping of five U.S. armored divisions and a postponement in the activation of a sixth. Beyond this, the War Department feared that if tank production fell behind schedule, British and Russian commitments would be met at the expense of additional postponements in Army requirements.⁴²

In the matter of aircraft, also, the American figures "came as a shock" to Lord Beaverbrook and his associates.⁴³ They objected to the release of heavy bombers to Russia and asked further that the U.S. compensate for Britain's losses in deliveries of other types by increasing the allotment of heavy bombers to the Royal Air Force. Otherwise, they warned, the air offensive against Germany might be seriously handicapped. Once again, a tender nerve in the American military establishment was exposed. The War Department was at that time making every effort to consign as many heavy bombers as could be obtained to Hawaii and the Philippines. Harriman was personally sympathetic with the British disappointment in this cut from two hundred to fifty-one heavy bombers that was envisaged, though he reported that Generals Embick, Burns, and Chaney believed that heavy bombers would have an important morale effect upon the Soviets, and Embick was impressed with the deterrent effect they might have upon Japan. At length, after the delegations had departed for Moscow, the President decided that the U.S.S.R. would receive no heavy bombers but that the total allocation of aircraft from the U.S. to the Soviet Union was to be increased from 1,200 to 1,800. This very substantial increase was to be met by reducing U.S. Army, rather than British, allocations from American production over the coming nine months.⁴⁴

These London proceedings gave pointed emphasis to the need for completing the Victory Program estimates in Washington and to the strenuous demands that would have to be imposed upon American productivity. As Prime Minister Churchill expressed it in a cable to Hopkins after Beaverbrook and Harriman left for Moscow:

The offers which we both are making to Russia are necessary and worth while. There is no disguising the fact however that they make grievous inroads into what is required by you for expanding your forces and by us for intensifying our war effort. You know where the shoe will pinch most in the next nine months.

We must both bend our efforts to making good the gaps unavoidably created. We here are unlikely to be able to expand our programmes much above

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Hall, *North American Supply*, p. 332.

⁴⁴ Leighton and Coakley, *Global Logistics and Strategy, 1940-1943*, pp. 100-1.

what is already planned. I earnestly hope that you will be able to raise the general level of yours by an immediate short-term effort.⁴⁵

Despite all the painful readjustments that had been necessary, the London conferences ended on a note of concord. Just before his departure with Harriman for Archangel on the cruiser *London*, Beaverbrook—by then regarded as Russia's "champion" in the War Cabinet—cabled to Hopkins on the twenty-first to thank him for his "efforts in making this conference possible."⁴⁶ At the highest levels, in both Washington and London, there was a common agreement that everything possible should be done to keep the Russians fighting until the spring, and in this spirit the two delegations set out for Moscow.

President Roosevelt gave expression to this in the letter of introduction which he sent to Harriman for delivery to Stalin. It read:

My Dear Mr. Stalin:

This note will be presented to you by my friend Averell Harriman, whom I have asked to be head of our delegation to Moscow.

Mr. Harriman is well aware of the strategic importance of your front and will, I know, do everything that he can to bring the negotiations in Moscow to a successful conclusion.

Harry Hopkins has told me in great detail of his encouraging and satisfactory visits with you. I can't tell you how thrilled all of us are because of the gallant defense of the Soviet armies.

I am confident that ways will be found to provide the material and supplies necessary to fight Hitler on all fronts, including your own.

I want particularly to take this occasion to express my great confidence that your armies will ultimately prevail over Hitler and to assure you of our great determination to be of every possible material assistance.⁴⁷

All was in readiness for the Moscow Conference.

45. Quoted in Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, p. 469.

46. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 386.

47. Quoted in *ibid.*

IX.

Underwriting Soviet Aid: The Politics of Foreign Policy

AS THE PRECEDING two chapters have shown, the Hopkins mission to Moscow at the end of July was a prelude to a series of far-reaching policy decisions relating to the Russian war. His conferences with Roosevelt and Churchill at the Atlantic meeting had led to the issuance of the joint proposal of August 15, suggesting a supply conference at the Soviet capital. Thereafter, matters had moved swiftly in both London and Washington, the entire tempo and scope of the aid to Russia program being raised to a new level of importance in Anglo-American policy and strategy.

This series of decisions necessitated the making of some arrangements for the financing of the U.S. program of Soviet supply. At the end of June the U.S.S.R. had asked for a five-year credit from the U.S. to provide financing for the massive lists of material needs that had been placed before American officials—lists that totaled \$1,836,507,823. The immediate fulfillment of these needs was utterly impossible, but by mid-September supply schedules had been calculated which did envisage delivery to the U.S.S.R., by June 30, 1942, of quantities of aid approaching the \$1 billion mark. Some action to underwrite this commitment was clearly called for. In submitting his memorandum of September 12 on the distribution of munitions to the Soviet Union, Secretary of War Stimson pointed out to the President that inclusion of Russia under the provisions of the lend-lease program seemed essential to the transfer of such a quantity of materials. Here, however, foreign policy decisions directly confronted the exigencies of domestic politics. The President's reaction to Stimson's suggestion was, in the words of one commentator, that the "time for this step had not yet arrived."¹ The reason for this

1. Winnacker, *The Office of Secretary of War under Henry L. Stimson*, MS, I, 73.

was clear. Harry Hopkins summed it up in a letter to Brendan Bracken, British Minister of Information, shortly after the Atlantic Conference, when he said:

We are having some difficulty with our public opinion with regard to Russia. The American people don't take aid to Russia easily. The whole Catholic population is opposed to it, all the Nazis and Italians and a lot of people who sincerely believe that Stalin is a great menace to the world.²

Making due allowance for such a sweeping generalization as that referring to the "whole Catholic population," this stated the crux of the problem. Before a continuation of the narrative of policy developments, it is necessary to turn once again to the climate of public opinion.

THE PRESS AND THE DECISIONS OF AUGUST AND
SEPTEMBER ON SOVIET AID

The announcement that Harry Hopkins had arrived in Moscow was not received well in the isolationist press. Much of the comment was sarcastic—the *Washington Times-Herald* and *New York Daily News* mockingly asking what Hopkins and "Pal Joey" had discussed and wondering what Hopkins had promised,³ the *Chicago Tribune* attempting to visualize what Hopkins must have thought about while enrolling Stalin in the cause of the Four Freedoms.⁴ The Patterson papers insisted that things had been going well enough for Britain and America in the Russian war, in view of the terrific losses being sustained by each of the antagonists. They reiterated that for Hitler and Stalin "to claw each other to bits" was the best of all solutions.⁵ The *Tribune* chose the occasion to make its endorsement of Congressman Day's concurrent resolution that barred Russia from lend-lease. Even if the Russians were paying for their supplies, it remarked, "Day's resolution would have the effect of declaring this country not an ally of the Soviets and that is important."⁶ The *Knoxville Journal* professed concern that "a man as susceptible to leaf-raking projects as Harry always was, is likely . . . to give away more than we've got."⁷ The *Saturday Evening Post* thought the whole pattern of U.S.—Soviet relations indicative of a "foreign malady" afflicting America. "Russian Communism is an international snake," it told its readers, "treacherous even to itself, knowing only venomous and deadly enmity to any other kind of social organism." In the *Post's* opinion the

2. Quoted in Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 373.

3. August 1, 1941.

4. August 6, 1941, p. 12.

5. *Washington Times-Herald*, August 7, 1941, p. 10.

6. August 6, 1941, p. 12.

7. Quoted in Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 345.

New Deal had never recognized this, and its infection with the ideology of a Laski or a Keynes easily equipped the administration to embrace Russia as an ally. The *Post* wondered what had happened to American character.⁸

In some quarters, the fact of Hopkins' visit to the Kremlin was taken to mean that the U.S. had become an ally of Russia, and administration policy was severely castigated for that reason. The *Wall Street Journal* charged that Hopkins' public statements about aiding the U.S.S.R. were a defiance of the treaty provisions of the Constitution. To send aid to Russia, it declared, not only violated "common sense," it was to "fly in the face of morals."⁹ The *New York Journal-American* was similarly exercised. It demanded to know by "what authority are we the allies of Bolshevism?" The President's actions, it stated, should prompt "immediate consideration" of Congressman Tinkham's resolution asking for an investigation of Communist influences upon U.S. foreign and domestic policies.¹⁰ The *Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, taking note of Hopkins' mission and of the August 2 exchange of notes with the U.S.S.R., editorialized that these developments came as "something of a shock, since it was assumed that such a bitterly and completely anti-democratic country as Russia would hardly be singled out for American assistance."¹¹

Such comments as these made it clear enough that the attitude of the isolationist press toward the German-Soviet war remained, essentially, as it had been immediately after the conflict started. The argument was still that Russia was a totalitarian despotism no more deserving of American support than Hitler's Germany, that communism was a menace of equal or greater dimensions than nazism, that aid to the Soviet Union was tantamount to aiding the cause of international communism, and that the only sensible course was to permit the two dictatorships to duel to the death. On September 5 the *New York Journal-American* protested:

Is our free country piling up deficits, bleeding its citizens white with confiscatory taxation, rushing headlong into national bankruptcy, shoveling out our wealth abroad, and shipping our war materials to alien nations to bolster Bolshevism in Russia, to spread it over all Europe including Britain, and to breed it and broadcast it in our own America? We may not think that this is what we want to do, but this is exactly what we are doing with our Bolshevik alliance and no smoke screen of fine phrases can obscure that outstanding fact.¹²

8. Editorial, "The Foreign Malady," *Saturday Evening Post*, CCXIV (August 2, 1941), 26.

9. August 1, 1941, p. 4.

10. August 4, 1941, p. 12.

11. August 9, 1941, p. 733.

12. Quoted in Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 792.

And the *Chicago Tribune* asserted shortly after the convening of the Harriman-Beaverbrook conferences in London:

The Nazi-Communist war is the only one of the last century that civilized men can regard with complete approval. They hope it will persist until both brutal antagonists have bled to death. To talk of aiding either of the contestants is treachery to the American people. They are equally our enemies, and the enemies of all free men.¹³

Basically these bastions of isolationism advocated a rigorous course of noninvolvement in the German-Soviet struggle. They were still not prone to raise the question of the consequences of Soviet defeat, content rather to applaud the ferocity of the conflict and seeing in this the best hope for Britain and America. Some were apprehensive about the military power demonstrated by the Soviet Union and argued from this with renewed emphasis about the dangers of the Western democracies becoming accessories to the engulfment of Europe under a flood-tide of bolshevism.¹⁴

Among the interventionist publications, the decision to supply the U.S.S.R. was strongly supported—indeed, one survey in early August reported that the “overwhelming majority” of daily newspapers were in favor of U.S. aid.¹⁵ There were continued expressions of misgivings in some interventionist circles, however, as illustrated by the attitude of the *New York Times*. The *Times*, for example, approved of Hopkins’ visit to Moscow but insisted that “nothing should divert us from our fixed policy of putting the West Front first.”¹⁶ The *New York Post* echoed the *Times*’s suspicions of the Stalin regime and advised the administration “to reckon, not only on the possibility of another turning of Stalin’s coat, but also on the possibility of complete Russian military and naval defeat.” It continued: “It would be a fine state of affairs . . . if we landed a hundred bombers on Russian soil just in time for a reconciliation between Hitler and Stalin. It would be just as bad if we landed them there at a time to coincide with Russian collapse on the field of battle.”¹⁷ The *Washington Post* was also apprehensive, writing on the anniversary of the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939:

The background of the Hitler-Stalin pact is not a stable basis on which to build a crusade for the establishment of the eight-point program enunciated

13. September 17, 1941, p. 12. Also quoted in *ibid.*, p. 793.

14. See the *Wall Street Journal*, September 15, 1941, p. 4.

15. “American Aid to Russia Against Nazis Approved by a Large Majority of Editors,” *United States News*, XI (August 15, 1941), 7.

16. July 31, 1941, p. 16.

17. Quoted in “American Aid to Russia . . .,” *United States News*, XI (August 15, 1941), 7.

by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill. At a time when the aid we are able to give countries fighting aggression is still comparatively meager, therefore, there can be little question as to the direction in which it should be flowing.¹⁸

Most interventionist organs of opinion were more strongly inclined to agree to the practicality of direct assistance to the Soviet Union. By the eve of the Moscow Conference, the *Washington Post* had persuaded itself that American supplies should go to the Russian front, not merely to Britain. Like the great majority of the press, it willingly saluted the valor of the Soviet Army and deemed it deserving of all that the U.S. could send it. On September 23 it advised Britain to forego its own deliveries from America and accept their diversion to Russia. "This," it declared, "is the most feasible method of aiding Russia in the magnificent stand which the Russians have put up against Hitler's forces."¹⁹

Soviet secrecy, and the knowledge that Western observers were still not permitted to visit the front, continued to breed distrust,²⁰ but more and more the implacable character of Soviet defense was leading to a consensus that any chance of Stalin's concluding a new "deal" with Hitler was highly remote. Walter Lippmann thought it obvious by mid-August that Russia was more comparable to China than to France and that the facts proved Hitler and Stalin to be "mortal enemies."²¹

At the same time, there continued to be a heavy emphasis in the interventionist journals upon the need for "realism." The magazine *United States News*, canvassing the attitudes of the daily press in early August, found heavy support for Soviet aid usually justified in these terms. The Scranton (Pa.) *Times* said it held no brief for Stalin, but that he was "useful to the democracies." The Pittsburgh *Post-Gazette* approved of aid to the U.S.S.R. but insisted that there be no "guff" about Russia fighting for freedom.²² The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* believed that the importance of the Russian front amply justified "putting on ice" ideological differences,²³ and the *Christian Science Monitor* was pleased to note that the Hopkins mission told "all the world that fastidiousness about ideology is not going to prevent Americans, any more than Britons, from seizing the opportunity that Hitler's attack on Russia has provided."²⁴ The *New York Herald-Tribune* deplored the "sheer pettifogg-

18. August 23, 1941, p. 6.

19. September 23, 1941, p. 8.

20. See the comment of Hanson W. Baldwin, *New York Times*, August 15, 1941, p. 9; and the *Washington Post*, September 28, 1941, Sec. II, p. 6.

21. *Washington Post*, August 19, 1941, p. 11.

22. Quoted in "American Aid to Russia . . .," *United States News*, XI (August 15, 1941), 7.

23. August 1, 1941, Sec. III, p. 2.

24. August 1, 1941, p. 18.

ing" that would not countenance helping a country fighting against Hitler with such resolution.²⁵

Certainly by the time of the departure of the Harriman and Beaverbrook missions for Moscow, Russia's dogged and determined struggle against Hitler had generally persuaded the spokesmen of interventionism that the Soviet Union was deserving of American help. There is little to indicate that the interventionist press was as impressed as were some members of Congress that the Russian war offered hope for American noninvolvement. At the same time, the long ordeal through which Russia had passed since June 22 aroused American sympathy, and Russia's courageous defense aroused American admiration. Alan Barth made an intensive study of editorial opinion on the question of aid for Russia during September and October, at the behest of Oscar Cox, legal counsel of the lend-lease office. It is relevant to note here Barth's conclusion that the unpopularity of the Soviet government had been offset to a considerable degree by this growing admiration of Russian bravery. His reading of the American press led him to conclude also that a "heavy majority" supported a policy of aid and even that there was a growing conviction "that the eastern front offered the last best chance on earth of stopping the Hitler legions." The collapse of the Soviet defense, he warned, would probably bring about a "deep spirit of defeatism on this side of the Atlantic."²⁶

It should be pointed out that powerful segments of the interventionist press, while not discounting the baleful record of Soviet communism, continued steadfast in the confidence that Anglo-American strength was more than adequate to cope with any future Soviet threat. So solid an organ of conservatism as *Barron's* minimized any danger of a Russian hegemony over Europe. It commented: "It seems somewhat of an exaggeration to visualize Russia after the war as a power strong enough economically and militarily to shape the future organization of Europe."²⁷ And there were continued hopes also that the final result of the war might be a transformation of the Soviet system of government. After Russia had announced its adherence to the principles of the Atlantic Charter before the Inter-Allied Council in London, the *New York Herald-Tribune* had this to say:

The fact [of this adherence] . . . points impressively to what those who have been holding up their hands in righteous horror over an association

25. September 21, 1941, Sec. II, p. 8.

26. Memorandum, Alan Barth to Oscar Cox, "Editorial Opinion on Aid to Russia," October 29, 1941 (OLLA, Russia File).

27. *Barron's, The National Financial Weekly*, XXI (September 15, 1941), 8.

with Communist totalitarianism have consistently overlooked. When Hitler forced the Soviets into the struggle on the democratic side, the result was not only to enlist Communism on behalf of democracy but also, inevitably, to promote the democratization of Communism.

The *Herald-Tribune* had high hopes that the Russia people could be fitted into an "international system of genuinely democratic peace and freedom."²⁸

Even if disposed strongly to endorse the policy of aid for Russia, the interventionist press did not devote itself to a consideration of the means of financing such aid. There was little discussion of lend-lease, or of other methods, though it must be added that the administration itself did not give much information on the subject. It left the impression, through September, first that the Russians were paying their own way, or that credits, not lend-lease grants, would be the only financial assistance that the U.S. would supply. There was little comment one way or the other concerning lend-lease. The *New York Herald-Tribune* gave its approval of Treasury and Defense Supplies Corporation advances to the Russians, adding cryptically that while no one would argue for "largess" to the U.S.S.R., the U.S. should also see to it that the Russians were able to get what they needed.²⁹ As the policy of Soviet aid became more and more accepted as important to American interests, in the view of the interventionists, acceptance of lend-lease as the financial solution to the problem certainly seemed foreshadowed.

PRESSURE GROUP ACTIVITY

By early August the Russian war had been of sufficient length for various organized groups, other than those concerned exclusively with questions of foreign policy, to take positions relative to U.S. policy.

The administration found its policies of aid for Russia endorsed in early August by the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor. This was an event of significance. The AFL was a stronghold of conservatism in the labor movement, and its hostility toward communism and Soviet Russia were long-standing traditions. Its support for the President's policies was an encouraging development from the vantage point of the White House, though this support was something less than enthusiastic.

The Executive Council decision was taken at a meeting on August 8. A resolution passed reiterated the AFL's continued antipathy for communism and denounced the notion of a U.S.—Soviet alliance as "un-

²⁸ September 25, 1941, p. 24.

²⁹ September 29, 1941, p. 22.

thinkable." Russia's friendship, it stated, was dictated only by "desperation and hypocrisy." Nevertheless, the AFL Council recommended that the U.S. "extend such assistance as we can to help Soviet Russia fight the Nazi war machine." This was necessary, said the council, because Nazi Germany was the principal threat to the U.S.³⁰ It remained to be seen whether the AFL convention, scheduled to meet in Seattle late in October, would endorse this provisional support, but President William Green's affirmation of support for Russian aid in a speech on August 8 was added encouragement for official policy.

Later in August, the Russian aid program received further endorsement from the Young Democratic Clubs of America, who met in convention in Louisville, Kentucky. On August 23 the YDC delegates adopted a resolution commending the foreign policies of President Roosevelt and Secretary Hull and stating with reference to the U.S.S.R.: "We approve of the policy of full and complete aid to Russia, believing that our hatred of communism and our determination to destroy its roots in this country should not blind us to the fact that Russia is battling our common foe."³¹

The dilemma posed by the Russian war was most clearly brought into focus by the debate over Soviet aid in the American Legion. This largest of all veterans organizations had been a vigorous supporter of national defense and defense aid policies during the crisis of 1940-41. At the same time, it had a long record of equally vigorous opposition to communism. To an unusual extent, the Legion symbolized the conflicting emotions that the German-Soviet war had brought to the surface, and its attitudes toward the administration's policies were of corresponding importance.

Shortly after the outbreak of the war in Russia, the Legion's national commander, Milo J. Warner, stated the attitude of the national executive committee of the Legion. At that time he stated that aid should be speeded to Britain in recognition of the primacy of the Nazi threat but that there was no occasion—in view of the shortages of armaments—even to discuss "pro or con" the question of helping Russia. He also emphasized that the war did not alter the Legion's stand with reference to communism.³²

In mid-August, the New York Department of the Legion met in convention at Rochester, and Commander Warner developed further

30. *New York Times*, August 9, 1941, p. 6.

31. The text of the resolution is in the *Congressional Record*, LXXXVII, A4021.

32. See above, pp. 77-78.

his views on the subject in a speech there. He told the New York Legionnaires:

If munitions and military supplies are being sold to Russia, United States military observers to the Russian front should be arranged. We understand that the President has not authorized aid to Russia under the Lend-Lease Law. We support that position. If military supplies to Russia are being given priority by the Administration these supplies, we feel, should be accompanied by our military observers.³³

The National Commander did not place himself in opposition to a priority rating for supplies to Russia, but he attached a condition, and he refused to countenance aid on the generous terms of lend-lease.

This moderate position was too much for the New York Department. The Bronx County delegation submitted a resolution condemning any form of assistance to Russia. Noting the prior record in foreign relations of the Soviet Union, particularly the Nazi-Soviet Pact, and noting also the Legion's record of hostility toward both German and Soviet ideologies, the resolution concluded: "Resolved, that the American Legion, Department of New York, in convention assembled, is opposed to our country . . . giving aid of any kind to Communistic Soviet Russia in its war with Nazi Germany or with any other country."³⁴

The convention leadership, reflecting the stand of the national executive committee, attempted to block the proposal in the resolutions committee, but the convention revolted. The Bronx County resolution was forced out, brought to the floor, and passed by an overwhelming vote.³⁵

This action of the New York Department promised a heated debate over the administration's Soviet aid policies when the Legion met in national convention in September. The convention was held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, from September 15 to 18, and Commander Warner addressed the delegates in the same vein as at Rochester. He repeated his position on aid to Russia and added: "Whatever aid Stalin can give in resisting Hitler is incidentally of benefit to sincere peoples everywhere. That does not call for any change in attitude toward the Communist Party in the United States."³⁶

Once again, there was strong opposition to the policy views of the national leadership. To short-circuit such a maneuver as the one led by

33. *New York Times*, August 14, 1941, p. 20.

34. Quoted in Frank S. Adams, *New York Times*, August 17, 1941, p. 17.

35. *Ibid.*

36. *Proceedings of the 23rd National Convention of the American Legion, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 15-18, 1941*. H. Doc. 538, 77th Cong., 2nd Sess. (1942), p. 25.

the Bronx delegation at Rochester, the report of the Committee on Foreign Relations passed over in silence the question of aid for Russia. It condemned the Axis Powers, decried any "appeasement" of the Axis, and gave its endorsement to the foreign policies of the President and Congress. It called upon Congress to take a further step and repeal the Neutrality Act. The committee was then confronted with a resolution condemning aid for Russia, so that the effort to avoid a debate on the subject proved futile. The resolution stated:

Whereas Russia and particularly the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has consistently over a period of years derided, ridiculed, condemned and attempted to destroy our democratic system of government; and

Whereas the American Legion has consistently and persistently fought such dangerous activities; and

Whereas the present war between Germany and Russia has not in any way changed the political philosophy of the Communist Party of Russia: Now therefore be it

Resolved, That the American Legion reiterate its oft-stated position on communism and definitely go on record as opposing aid to Russia under the Lend-Lease Aid Act.³⁷

By stating their case on this occasion strictly in terms of opposition to lend-lease assistance, and by saying nothing of aid extended on the basis of cash purchases or credits, the Legion's critics of the Soviet aid program seemed willing to compromise with the announced stand of the national leadership. Nevertheless, the Committee defeated the proposal by a resounding vote of thirty-four to six. Thereafter, however, the resolution's supporters brought it before the convention. There the Committee on Foreign Relations succeeded in preventing a vote on the resolution itself by putting forward a motion that it be tabled. The sharp division of opinion on the issue of lend-lease aid for the U.S.S.R. was revealed in the vote on the motion to table. The motion carried 874-604. The New York, Pennsylvania, California, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Kentucky, and Kansas delegations comprised the bulk of the minority.³⁸

This division within an organization of strongly interventionist sympathies was indicative of the reasons for the President's unwillingness, throughout the summer and into the fall, to discuss the question of lend-lease assistance to the Soviet Union. Avoidance of the issue seemed particularly expedient in view of the fact that a second lend-lease appropriation bill was pending just as the Legion Convention was in progress.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 90.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 91.

THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND AID FOR RUSSIA

Not long after the adjournment of the Legion Convention, Dr. George Gallup, director of the American Institute of Public Opinion, wrote in his syndicated column that the vote on the question of aid for Russia in the Legion convention closely paralleled the prevailing opinions of the American public.³⁹ Surveys conducted by the AIPO during August and September evidenced an almost equal division among the electorate on the question of lend-lease aid for the U.S.S.R. but a majority consensus in support of selling munitions to that country.

As discussed in a preceding chapter, the AIPO had inquired of a national opinion sample late in June as to whether aid should be supplied to Russia "on the same basis" that it was furnished to Britain. The result then was:

Yes	35%	No	54%	No opinion	11%
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On August 5, after the publicity that had been given to Hopkins' visit to the Kremlin, the AIPO sampled opinion on the more direct question: "Would you be willing to see the United States include Russia under the lend-lease program?" Only 38 per cent answered "yes," but those in outright opposition had declined to 39 per cent. Eleven per cent of the sample said that it "did not know" if lend-lease were advisable, and a further 12 per cent was "undecided."⁴⁰ The decline in opposition was significant, but significant also was the fact that those who gave unqualified approval to the suggestion of lend-lease aid were still in a minority. In April an impressive 77 per cent had expressed approval of lend-lease aid for Great Britain and its "Allies."⁴¹

This same AIPO poll also included the question: "Should the United States sell war supplies to Russia?" The difference here was striking, as these results attest: 70 per cent of the sample answered "yes," while only 23 per cent answered "no."⁴²

Then, in late September, on the eve of the Moscow Conference, the AIPO polled a national opinion sample on this question: "If Russia is unable to pay cash for war materials bought in this country, do you think we should sell them materials on credit supplied by our government?" When it became a matter of the U.S. financing Soviet aid, whether by credits or by lend-lease, the response was still not enthusiastic. Nevertheless, 49 per cent answered that credits should be extended to the

39. *Washington Post*, September 24, 1941, p. 13.

40. Cantrill (ed.), *Public Opinion, 1935-1946*, p. 411.

41. *Ibid.*

42. *Ibid.*, p. 1162.

Soviet government, in contrast to 44 per cent who gave a negative response.⁴³

The statement of Harry Hopkins quoted earlier in this chapter, to the effect that the American people "did not take aid to Russia easily," seems definitely substantiated in these figures. At the same time, it should be noted that they had not been taken into the confidence of the administration on Soviet need for either credits or lend-lease, if American aid were to be supplied. There was a decided majority in favor of selling supplies to the Soviet Union, and the impression conveyed in most administration statements relative to the financing of Soviet aid was that the aid was on such a cash basis. In transmitting to Congress on September 11 his second quarterly report on lend-lease operations, the President remarked: "The Soviet Government's purchases here are being made through its own funds through its regular purchasing agency."⁴⁴

This problem of finance, and the administration's handling of the problem, is treated in detail later in this chapter. It is pertinent to comment here that the poll results through September provided grounds for assuming that the majority of the public would have been willing to follow the President's lead if he had made clear the need for American financial help for the Soviet Union. This also was the conclusion which Alan Barth drew from his study of editorial opinion near the end of October.⁴⁵

Turning from the direct issues of aid and finance, it is relevant here to canvass the general impact of the Russian war upon the public mood by the late summer and early fall of 1941. On the basis of AIPO polls pertaining to all aspects of the international conflict and American relationships thereto, Dr. Gallup wrote in mid-September that the continuation of the Russian war had produced a decline in the "war spirit" in the U.S. Poll results indicated, he wrote, that the "interventionist" mood of the American public rose and fell in relation to the public's perception of the dangers confronting Great Britain. Since June 22, he found, there had been a steady rise in the number of Americans who believed that Britain would win the war against Germany—an increase of from 50 to 69 per cent according to AIPO figures. This was accompanied by a fall during the same period of from 24 to 17 per cent in the number of those favoring American entry into the war. In addition, he said, the sentiment in favor

43. *Ibid.*, p. 1102.

44. *Second Report Under the Act of March 11, 1941* (1941), p. iv.

45. Memorandum, Alan Barth to Oscar Cox, "Editorial Opinion on Aid to Russia," October 29, 1941 (OLLA, Russia File).

of convoying aid to Britain had fallen from 56 per cent in early July to 52 per cent in the first week of September.⁴⁶

This would indicate, from one standpoint, that the isolationist argument that the emergency was declining was falling upon receptive minds. The longer the war in Russia lasted, and the more intense the battle there became, this contention seemed to receive added emphasis in isolationist interpretations of the general international situation. Herbert Hoover declared in a radio address made from Chicago on September 16: "A cold survey of the world situation will show that the dangers of ultimate totalitarian success are very much less than even ten weeks ago." As evidence of this he referred to the heavy losses being sustained by both Germany and the Soviet Union. The former president proceeded from this assertion to endorse the supplying of aid "to democracies alone of Europe and Asia" and to condemn any alliance or association with Russia.⁴⁷

But if the general public was experiencing a lessening of the "war spirit," if it were disposed to agree with Hoover that the world situation was less dangerous, the opinion polls did not indicate that this proceeded from a feeling of indifference toward the Russo-German war. The "plague-on-both-their-houses" attitude, according to the polls, was not taking root. The previously cited attitudes toward U.S. aid for Russia gave evidence of a lively concern in the outcome of the war in Russia. Particularly noteworthy was the response to an AIPO survey addressed indirectly to that point. The question asked of a national sample was: "In the present war between Germany and Russia, which side would you like to see win—Germany or Russia?" The results, in June and September, were:

	GERMANY	RUSSIA	NO DIFFERENCE	NO OPINION	NEITHER
June 24:	4%	72%	17%	7%	—
Sept. 9:	4	70	—	7	19

An Office of Public Opinion Research study early in July reported virtually identical results.⁴⁸

These figures would indicate that it was the continuation of the Russian war, with the resultant decline in the perils facing Britain, which accounted for any lessening of the "war spirit," and that the consequence of this was a pronounced concern in Russia's fate. This would suggest that, while there were many misgivings and deep-seated animosities

46. *Washington Post*, September 19, 1941, p. 13.

47. *New York Times*, September 17, 1941, p. 1.

48. Cantrill (ed.), *Public Opinion, 1935-1946*, p. 1187.

which stood in the way of approving of aid for Russia, the climate of opinion was such that the public would accept such action if the President offered leadership on the issue. It would also suggest that the argument made by some moderate interventionists in Congress that the Russian front presented a last opportunity to insure German defeat without direct American involvement was an argument quite consistent with the general public mood. Conversely, to whatever extent the public might have looked upon American participation in the war against Germany as an ultimate inevitability, it could not but welcome the continuation of the raging battle in Russia.

The animosity and distrust felt toward the Soviet Union continued to be a factor to be carefully reckoned with in the shaping of U.S. policies. At the same time, in the broad complex of forces shaping public opinion during those months of national and international crisis, circumstances provided a solid foundation upon which political leadership could anchor the developing program of aid for Soviet Russia.

CATHOLIC OPINION AND PRESIDENTIAL ACTION

The most difficult of all domestic political questions that confronted the President's policies toward the Soviet Union was the danger of concerted opposition from religious circles in the U.S. Whether he overestimated this danger is really not the important point. The fact is that he was profoundly concerned with it.

The previously mentioned memorandum prepared by Alan Barth on editorial opinion on aid for Russia stated that along with the isolationist journals, the "church press" generally was the only other source of consistent opposition to Soviet aid. Certainly the religious factor was one that exposed highly sensitive emotions and issues and one which provided the best of all avenues for isolationists to attack the President's policies toward Soviet Russia.

Soviet atheism was repugnant alike to Protestantism and Catholicism. A leading Protestant denominational organ editorialized in early August:

For there is no difference between Russia and Germany so far as Godly, hopeful purposes are concerned. Many believers will feel great distress at the thought of our goods, our labors, our help and possibly our sons being sent to bolster up that terrible reign of terror and atheism. . . .⁴⁹

It was the Roman Catholic church, however, whose beliefs were the prime object of concern on the part of both advocates and opponents of the aid to Russia policy. By late summer it was obvious that America

49. "Godless Propaganda Increases," *The Presbyterian*, CXI (August 7, 1941), 4.

First was concentrating more than ever upon mobilizing Catholic support for its stand against the President's program. On September 2 letters were sent from the national headquarters to all chairmen of local chapters of America First, calling to their attention the papal encyclical on atheistic communism. Newspaper advertisements which publicized the persecution of the church in the U.S.S.R. were prepared by the organization. The chairman of the Brooklyn Chapter of America First organized a Catholic Laymen's Committee for Peace, and the national headquarters of the America First Committee agreed to put up the money to finance a national poll of all the Catholic clergy, through the Laymen's Committee, on attitudes toward official policies regarding the Soviet Union.⁵⁰

This vigorous isolationist bid for religious—and especially Roman Catholic—support posed serious problems for the President. Interventionist spokesmen could point to the record of Nazi persecution of the church and to the profoundly anti-Christian character of National Socialist ideology, but this of itself could hardly suffice for the defense of a major outpouring of American assistance to Soviet Russia. Such a defensive posture was not in keeping with the strongly idealistic *élan* with which the President had for a long time striven to present American goals and interests in the midst of the world crisis. He had called upon the nation to mobilize its resources so as to become the "arsenal of democracy" and to bend its efforts to help bring into being a world where the "four freedoms" could flourish. Nevertheless, throughout the summer the most effective reply that interventionist spokesmen seemed able to devise in response to this isolationist attack was that American interests compelled support for any enemy of Hitler and Germany.⁵¹

The President committed a blunder in his strategy of "psychological warfare" precisely at the time when he was preparing to make a broader commitment to Russia. This was the strange and curious omission from the Atlantic Charter of any reference to freedom of religion, although each of the other four freedoms had been included in that majestic statement of war aims. This naturally afforded additional ammunition to his critics, who proceeded to make the claim that the omission was prompted by a desire on the part of Roosevelt and Churchill to avoid giving offense to Stalin.⁵²

50. Cole, *America First*, pp. 86-87, 226. See the two-column page length ad, sponsored by the New York Chapter of America First, with the lead caption "CAN THE REDS WORSHIP GOD?" *New York Times*, October 3, 1941, p. 12.

51. An interesting analysis of this problem is given by Edwin L. James in the *New York Times*, September 7, 1941, Sec. IV, 3.

52. See Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 361.

Shortly after the Atlantic Conference and the publication of the joint message to Stalin, the administration's case respecting Soviet Russia was given its most effective presentation to that date in an important address made by Associate Justice Frank Murphy on August 19. Justice Murphy, a Roman Catholic, was invited to speak before the international convention of the Supreme Council of the Knights of Columbus, which afforded an unusual opportunity to defend official policy before a distinguished and influential group of Catholic laymen.

Justice Murphy conceded that among all men who cherished religious freedom and democracy there was "little to choose between the communism of Soviet Russia and the nazism of Germany." He remarked that "in ordinary circumstances" the U.S. could "afford to be indifferent" toward a clash between two such dangerous ideologies. But in the context of the grave crisis confronting the U.S. and all civilization this could not be the case, he said, and he made this declaration to the assembled delegates:

While the Communist philosophy remains a danger to the Christian religion, it is not today the greatest danger. The overshadowing menace—and the one from which we must not let ourselves be distracted—is the philosophy of nazism embodied in the present German military regime. In that philosophy and in that regime we face not merely Godlessness, but Godlessness which even now is in grave danger of carrying out its ruthless program—a program for which history may have no adequate parallel since the days of Nero and his successor tyrants on the throne of ancient Rome.

We shall not, therefore, be deceived by this sham crusade in behalf of Christianity and Western civilization. Our hope and our safety lies not in a triumph of Nazi arms and the Nazi creed. We want no part of this or any other form of totalitarian creed. Our hope lies in the triumph of democracy. . . .

And, with reference to that triumph of democracy, Justice Murphy made this assertion:

But we know that Nazism, with its superior competence and perverted intelligence, its extraordinary energy and missionary zeal, its profound belief in racial superiority and destiny, its fanatical intolerance, and above all its tremendous military power and skill, is by far the greater menace to free nations and free institutions. It is at present the real menace.⁵³

A more forceful statement of the primacy of the Nazi threat as justification of the emerging program of aid for Russia could hardly have been

53. The complete text of Justice Murphy's address was in the *Washington Post*, August 20, 1941, p. 7; and a lengthy summary was carried in the *New York Times* on the same date. In both newspapers, the report of the speech was given front page coverage.

made, nor could a more fitting occasion have been chosen for the presentation of the statement. From Catholic sources during the course of the late summer came expressions of opinion relative to the Soviet aid program which were certainly reassuring to the administration. Near the end of July the *Ann Arbor Catholic* raised the question as to whether America could "justly assist Russia to defeat Germany" and ended by approving the measures being taken. The reasoning of that Catholic publication was:

In aiding Russia we aid ourselves, but at the same time we assist a nation whose government is an avowed enemy of the American way of life and our democratic freedom. We aid an open enemy of the Catholic Church, but such aid is justified on the condition that we must have a grave reason for performing such an action. This seems to be verified in the case of aid to Russia.

The judgment of our Government to aid Russia is based on cold analysis of a factual situation, as in the present state of affairs there exists a potential hierarchy of enemies to the United States. Thus, the Nazi occupies first place as he is the greatest threat.⁵⁴

This line of reasoning upheld the interventionist position that aid to Russia was not synonymous with aid to communism and that the "hierarchy" of national enemies justified such a course of action. The same reasoning was followed by the Most Reverend James A. Griffin, Bishop of Springfield, Illinois, in a speech before the National Council of Catholic Women in September. Bishop Griffin described the Hitler menace as "universal." He said that it would be "idiotic" for Americans to change their attitudes toward bolshevism, but he added:

Hitler is not attacking the ideology of the Communist International, but is attacking Russia as an independent world power.

The Republic of the Soviet is being attacked by Hitler for the same reason as were Catholic Poland, Holland, Belgium and Norway, as well as Greece and Yugoslavia. Hitler's aim is not to defend Europe against Communism or against anything else, but simply to conquer Europe.⁵⁵

These opinions were anything but unanimous. The conservative *Catholic World* continued in vehement opposition to collaboration with Soviet Russia, and the Jesuit publication *America* looked upon the administration's action with great distaste. There continued to be strong opposition to the President's policies in many Catholic quarters—the

54. This editorial was quoted in Father Coughlin's *Social Justice*, August 11, 1941, p. 2, in order to single it out for purposes of denunciation.

55. *New York Times*, October 4, 1941, p. 11, as quoted in an ad sponsored by Fight for Freedom.

opposition seemed, in the judgment of the White House, to outweigh the support. The great sticking point, notwithstanding the views of such men as Bishop Griffin and Bishop Hurley, was the papal encyclical *Divini redemptoris*. Therein was provided a solid basis upon which those opposed to collaboration with the U.S.S.R. could rest their case—a fact assiduously exploited by isolationist groups. It enabled such organs as the *Brooklyn Tablet* and Father Coughlin's *Social Justice* to assert without reservation that no Catholic could cooperate "in any manner whatsoever" with communism, in view of the injunctions of the encyclical. This was the principal source of the deep concern felt on the matter by President Roosevelt, and for good reason. Sumner Welles wrote to him on August 25 with reference to a conversation that same day with two Roman Catholic prelates. The two clergymen had advised Welles that the administration should put "constant emphasis" upon the point that aid to Russia did not mean approval of Communist doctrine. They further advised the Under-Secretary that what was really needed was some statement from the Pope elaborating upon the encyclical in such a way as to provide a sanction for this distinction.⁵⁶

The President had by that time already resolved upon such a step, in view of the "paramount importance" which he had assigned to the Soviet aid program in August. He decided to send Myron Taylor again to the Vatican as his personal representative. As Taylor has written, "clarifications of American feeling and opinion to His Holiness regarding aid to the Soviet Union and of the views of His Holiness in the same regard, were desirable."⁵⁷ This, in addition to the need for an exchange of views between the President and Pope on the Atlantic Charter, provided the occasion for Taylor's second mission to the Vatican.

Both in his instructions to Taylor, and in his letter to the Pope for delivery by his Special Representative, the President made evident the trend of his thinking upon the religious complications affecting his policies and indicated the strategy which he envisaged to meet those complications. The instructions to Taylor consisted primarily of an exposition of the Atlantic Charter, but the President added that in the over-all program there set forth "freedom of religion and freedom of expression are necessary parts." The attack on the church in Russia in 1918, he wrote, had as its primary aim getting the church out of politics, and he added that his information indicated that the churches of the Soviet

56. Cited in Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 794.

57. Quoted in Myron C. Taylor (ed.), *Wartime Correspondence Between President Roosevelt and Pope Pius XII* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1947), pp. 57-58.

Union were presently "open for worship." Taylor was told to inform the Holy See to this effect:

The President is definitely bearing in mind the possibility of persuading the Government of Russia ultimately to accept freedom of religion—but it must be remembered that the Russian Government is essentially a dictatorship, and that Russia is defending its own soil. At the present time Russia is in no sense the aggressor nation—Germany is.⁵⁸

The first facet of the President's plan was to secure some concession with reference to religious freedom from the Soviet government. Taylor himself had suggested this to Roosevelt in a letter of August 30, though it is likely that this was already in the President's mind. Taylor called his attention in the letter to Article 124 of the Soviet Constitution, remarking that its existence did not seem to be generally recognized in the U.S. and suggesting that Stalin might be persuaded to make "some kind of a declaration" regarding it. Taylor commented that such a declaration "might change opinion on this question in some places."⁵⁹

The second facet of the strategy the President was developing to deal with the religious problem surrounding his desire to aid Russia, which was dependent upon some event of the nature suggested by Taylor, was clearly evidenced in the letter written to Pope Pius XII on September 3. Delivered to His Holiness on September 9, the letter repeated the Chief Executive's belief that the churches of Russia were "open" and then went on to state:

... I believe there is a real possibility that Russia may as a result of the present conflict recognize freedom of religion in Russia, although, of course, without recognition of any official intervention on the part of any church in education or political matters within Russia. I feel that if this can be accomplished it will put the possibility of the restoration of real religious liberty in Russia on a much better footing than religious freedom is in Germany today.

... In my opinion, the fact is that Russia is governed by a dictatorship, as rigid in its manner of being as is the dictatorship in Germany. I believe, however, that this Russian dictatorship is less dangerous to the safety of other nations than is the German form of dictatorship. The only weapon which the Russian dictatorship uses outside of its own borders is communist propaganda which I, of course, recognize has in the past been utilized for the purpose of breaking down the form of government in other countries, religious beliefs, et cetera. Germany, however, not only has utilized, but is utilizing, this kind of propaganda as well and has also undertaken the employment of

58. Quoted in Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 795.

59. Letter of Myron C. Taylor to President Roosevelt, August 30, 1941 (Roosevelt Library, Official File 220).

every form of military aggression outside of its borders for the purpose of world conquest by force of arms and by force of propaganda. I believe that the survival of Russia is less dangerous to religion, to the church as such, and to humanity in general than would be the survival of the German form of dictatorship. Furthermore, it is my belief that the leaders of all churches in the United States should recognize these facts clearly and should not close their eyes to these basic questions and by their present attitude on this question directly assist Germany in her present objectives. . . .⁶⁰

Clearly, the President intended to divert attention from the anti-religious tenets of Soviet ideology, which he did not regard as a serious threat, and focus it upon the antireligious tenets of nazism. His purpose was to brand German totalitarianism as the foremost enemy of Christianity. If he could accomplish this, it would restore to him a position of leadership in the statement of ideals that should guide American foreign policy and, more immediately, would prepare the way for underwriting the projected aid commitments to the U.S.S.R. To achieve this, of course, some papal exegesis upon *Divini redemptoris* was definitely needed, as well as some act or declaration from the Soviet government pertaining to Article 124 of its constitution. In quest of the first of these, Myron Taylor departed for Rome in the first week of September. When Ambassador Oumansky called at the White House on September 11, the President raised the second problem.

The White House conference of that date, attended also by Secretary Hull and by Hopkins, was concerned chiefly with the political obstacles in the way of financing aid for Russia. In the course of the discussion, the President referred to Article 124 of the Soviet Constitution. Then, Secretary of State Hull's notes report on the meeting:

He [President Roosevelt] suggested that if Moscow could get some publicity back to this country regarding the freedom of religion during the next few days without waiting for the Harriman Mission to reach Moscow, it might have a very fine educational effect before the next lend-lease bill comes up in Congress.⁶¹

Nothing further was heard from Ambassador Oumansky on this subject, and even up to the departure of the Harriman Mission for Moscow the President had not reached any final decision on whether—as Taylor had suggested—he should make a personal request to Stalin for some “declarations” or “publicity” on the issue of religion in the Soviet Union. The great concern of the administration for the problem

60. Roosevelt, ed., *F. D. R.: His Personal Letters*, II, 1204-5.

61. *Foreign Relations*, 1941, I, 832.

continued, as reflected not only in the September 11 conference but also in the attention given to the matter by Harriman himself.⁶² With the approach of the time for the negotiation of formal supply commitments to the U.S.S.R., with the question of financing these commitments still unresolved, and with a second lend-lease appropriation bill pending and over 90 per cent of available lend-lease funds already allocated, this concern could not but increase.

Just as the Harriman-Beaverbrook conferences in London were concluding, a report was received from Polish sources which provided the "break" the President felt was needed. While in London, Harriman met with General Sikorski of the Polish government-in-exile to receive requests for the supply of lend-lease equipment to the Polish army contingents being formed in the Soviet Union. Sikorski mentioned to Harriman that Soviet authorities were permitting Roman Catholic and Jewish priests to be assigned as chaplains to the Polish troops and that opportunities for religious services were being given. Harriman suggested to Sikorski that this be made public in the U.S. and promptly reported the information to the President and Hopkins.⁶³ Whether at Sikorski's suggestion or otherwise, the Polish Ambassador in Washington, Ciechanowski, passed the word on to the State Department where it "created the greatest interest." The President acted immediately. At his personal request, Colonel William J. Donovan—himself a Roman Catholic—called on Ciechanowski on September 27 to discuss this and other aspects of Soviet-Polish relations and informed the Ambassador that the President was anxious that the information about the chaplains be made public. Donovan suggested that Ciechanowski write a letter to him on the matter, which Donovan would then turn over to the President. Ciechanowski readily agreed.⁶⁴

Down to the time of Harriman's departure from England for the Soviet Union, Moscow had vouchsafed no response to the President's suggestion to Oumansky on September 11 that some publicity with reference to religion in Russia be addressed to the American public and Congress. In the matter of the Polish chaplains, the President found the sort of information he had hoped for. With this at hand ready for use,

62. Harriman's secretary, R. P. Meiklejohn, made inquiries at the State Department early in September for information regarding the religious situation in Russia. Memorandum: Religion in Russia, by R. P. Meiklejohn, September 6, 1941. See also a lengthy letter from Ben V. Cohen to Harriman, discussing Bolshevism and religion and Soviet religious policies, September 12, 1941. Both are in the Harriman Mission, Washington Office Files. (Hereinafter, this will be cited as Harriman Files.)

63. Telegram, Harriman to the President and Hopkins, September 21, 1941 (Harriman Files).

64. Ciechanowski, *Defeat in Victory*, pp. 54-55.

and with his case presented to the Vatican by Myron Taylor, the President prepared to attack the religious opposition to his Soviet policies simultaneously with the concluding of the supply agreements at Moscow. According to the recollections of Robert Sherwood, "There were some impatient people who thought that the President exaggerated the strength of Catholic sentiment, but it was his way to travel with extreme wariness wherever religious sensibilities were involved."⁶⁵ This was certainly the case in this situation.

In the context of this climate of opinion, which, whatever its actual state, was one in which the President thought it necessary to proceed with great caution—especially out of regard for "religious sensibilities," consideration must now be given to the official efforts to find a means of financing the Soviet aid program down to the eve of the Moscow Conference. As suggested earlier, here was the principal point of impact between the decisions being reached in August and September relative to Soviet aid and the exigencies of domestic politics.

FINANCING SOVIET AID: INDECISION AND AMBIGUITIES

The consequences of the uncertainty felt in official quarters on public attitudes toward aid for Russia led to serious difficulties in the devising of methods to underwrite the Soviet supply program. Throughout August and September, press reports pertaining to this issue were so contradictory or ambiguous that an observer could hardly discern just what was taking place.

Back from the Atlantic Conference, the President was naturally asked, at his first press conference following the publication of the joint message to Stalin, if he contemplated the extension of lend-lease to the Soviet Union. On August 1, when asked this question, he had parried it by saying that there would be no determination of the matter until Hopkins had returned from Moscow. At the August 16 press conference, he simply answered, "No." When a reporter inquired if this was because Russia "had the cash to pay," the President replied: "Yes, the same thing."⁶⁶

This statement, according to one Washington correspondent, "puzzled Government officials and members of Congress." He wrote that it was generally recognized in Washington that Soviet assets and credits in the U.S. were known to be inadequate for financing any supply operation of the scope apparently envisaged in the joint message to Stalin

65. *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 384.

66. Roosevelt Library, President's Personal File 1-P. Press Conferences, XVIII (July-December, 1941).

of that week. The reporter said that the United Press had been told by "reliable sources" that Soviet aid would not be under lend-lease.⁶⁷

Turner Catledge of the *New York Times* received a different impression from his Washington contacts. He reported on the day following the President's press conference, despite the President's statement: "The Administration is understood to be revising its new lease-lend program to include substantial aid to Russia, although officials concede that assistance to the Soviets presents difficulties and risks, both technical and political."⁶⁸

These contradictory reports were indicative, at least, of the uncertainty at the White House as to just how it should proceed in the matter. On August 18, the President met with Congressional leaders to discuss the conferences at Argentia with Churchill and to discuss a second request for lend-lease funds. The meeting was attended by Senate Majority Leader Barkley, by Chairman Connally of the Foreign Relations Committee, Chairman George of the Finance Committee, Chairman Bloom of the Foreign Affairs Committee, and by the Acting Speaker, Congressman Woodrum of Virginia. With most of the first lend-lease appropriation of \$7 billion already allocated, the Chief Executive advised the Congressional leaders that within the next few weeks a second request for additional funds would be essential.⁶⁹

Russia and the Russian aid program were naturally topics of prime importance at the White House meeting. The legislators were reportedly "heartened" by the information given them by the President relative to the fighting in Russia. They emerged from the conference quite optimistic on that point, their remarks indicating that a winter stalemate at least was clearly anticipated. One of the participants, who asked not to be named, told the press that he had been "very skeptical" about Russia's prospects before the meeting but that he felt considerably "re-assured" by the information given. He also made the significant comment, according to one account, that he "believed that Russia's holding out would lessen the necessity of active participation by this country to insure eventual victory."⁷⁰

The conference did not produce any specific statement, either by the White House or by the Congressional participants, as to the means of financing the Soviet aid program. During the ensuing week comments in the press relative to the August 18 meeting indicated that the President had been advised that serious difficulties for the lend-lease

67. Arthur Hatcher, *Washington Post*, August 18, 1941, p. 1.

68. August 17, 1941, p. 7.

69. Robert C. Albright, *Washington Post*, August 19, 1941, p. 1.

70. Turner Catledge, *New York Times*, August 19, 1941, p. 1.

appropriation request would develop if Russia were included therein. An AP dispatch put it this way:

Congressional leaders were said to have advised Mr. Roosevelt that a new appropriation for aid to Britain and China probably could be put through Congress without difficulty if it were made clear that none of the money would go to Russia.

It was decided, informants said, that no mention would be made in connection with the request for an additional allotment, but that Administration floor leaders would be empowered to state that Russia was not to benefit from the appropriation.

The "informants" mentioned were said to have been "Administration lieutenants," who also were reported as saying that it had been decided that the U.S.S.R. aid program would be facilitated through the extension of credits of some description, rather than through lend-lease.⁷¹ In another dispatch, an unnamed but "well-informed official" was quoted as saying that it had been definitely agreed at the White House meeting that none of the new lend-lease funds would be used for Russia.⁷²

In the midst of this speculation the most meaningful and forthright comment on the whole matter came from Federal Loan Administrator Jesse Jones, when he told reporters on August 20: "If it becomes a matter of administration policy to help Russia and if she is unable to pay for things she needs from this country, I imagine some way will be found to help her out."⁷³ Yet, even Mr. Jones spoke in the conditional sense, and when asked if the Russians had applied for a loan he answered that no "definite" negotiations had taken place.

AD HOC FINANCING, AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER

The course of policy developments during subsequent weeks indicated that two extremely important understandings had been reached between the President and the Congressional leaders with whom he had consulted. These developments pointed, first, to the fact that the President had succeeded in winning the support of the legislative leaders for his Russian aid program. They also pointed to a consensus on the part of the Chief Executive and the legislators that the second lend-lease appropriation bill would encounter serious difficulties if there were any proposals made to include Soviet aid within the framework of lend-lease operations. The Soviet program continued to be presented—pending legislative action on the lend-lease measure—as a thing apart, financed out of Soviet funds

71. *New York Times*, August 24, 1941, p. 1.

72. *Washington Post*, August 24, 1941, p. 4.

73. Turner Catledge, *New York Times*, August 21, 1941, p. 1.

or supplemented by U.S. credits that were extended only in return for the pledge of sufficient collateral. The most that was ever suggested, almost to the end of September, was that the Russians might receive a loan of some description, probably from the RFC. Very probably, the President was still undecided during most of this time as to just what method he would—and could—use to finance the Soviet program, but his conviction that the Soviet aid program was essential continued as strong as ever. Only one thing was certain: if it were within the realm of political possibility, “some way would be found” to help the Russians.

As a consequence, while taking every precaution to emphasize that Russia was not under lend-lease during the appropriation bill debates, the administration and its spokesmen on Capitol Hill steadfastly held out against any legislative enactment which would have operated to exclude Russia from lend-lease aid. It was an involved strategy, but one which the President considered necessary to counter the domestic opposition to his policies. Both he and his Congressional advisers were clearly afraid that any prompt inclusion of Russia in the lend-lease measure might imperil the entire program of defense aid by provoking a prolonged battle on the second appropriation bill. In addition, the President was apparently seeking to play for time while undertaking the moves recounted already in this chapter to overcome the opposition—especially that of religious circles—to his aid for Russia policy.

As mentioned previously, the Soviet Ambassador had made a request for substantial credit at the time he presented the first aid lists on June 30, expressing a preference for this over any lend-lease arrangements. Therafter, the State Department had arranged for consultations on the subject between Oumansky and Jesse Jones, Federal Loan Administrator and Chairman of the Board of the RFC. By the middle of August the financial aspects of the Soviet aid operations were demanding a solution, but little progress had been made. In a conversation on August 15, Jones had expressed his personal agreement in principle to a loan, but the question of collateral presented a formidable hurdle. The RFC was then short on loanable funds. During September and October, simultaneously with the second lend-lease appropriation, a request was pending in Congress for an authorization to increase the lending capacity of the agency. As for collateral, the law required the borrower to offer U.S. bonds, bonds of a political subdivision of the U.S., or certain classes of private securities. The Russians had none of these. Oumansky was extremely

unhappy. On August 21 he called on Welles to report that despite several conversations with Jones no basis for negotiation had been reached.⁷⁴

Since the White House was not willing, for reasons already described, to risk the provision of lend-lease funds, other methods had to be found. As the British were to suggest, it could have been arranged that lend-lease articles sent to Britain could have been re-transferred to the Soviet Union. The Lend-Lease Act empowered the President to authorize such transfers. This would have constituted an abdication of policy control, leaving the most important single aspect of U.S.—Soviet relations to be conducted through a broker. Although some segments of the interventionist press suggested this as the way out of the dilemma, neither the White House nor the State Department looked with any favor upon such a course of action, except as a last resort. And even this approach offered much the same perils as those involved in a direct inclusion of the U.S.S.R. under lend-lease, since it could hardly have failed to have brought attacks upon the entire lend-lease program by the opponents of Soviet aid.

With progress on credits or lend-lease stalled, Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau came temporarily to the rescue of the Soviet program on August 15 with an advance of \$10 million against future deliveries of gold from Russia. Morgenthau was a vigorous supporter of Soviet aid and had readily agreed to an exchange of notes with Oumansky on August 2 pledging the willingness of the Treasury to make some gold purchases, without restriction, for at least one year.⁷⁵ The \$10 million advance was small consolation to the Russians, but it did help tide their purchasing operations over a difficult period. None of these arrangements was made public at the time.⁷⁶

Of more significance were the negotiations undertaken by the State Department in July concerning the purchase by the U.S. of critical and strategic raw materials from the Soviet Union. Jones and Oumansky had discussed this point in their negotiations, and on July 28 the Department of State had made a formal proposal to the Soviet Embassy that arrangements be worked out. On August 12 the Soviet Embassy had replied in a note that it would welcome such an agreement, and three days later the Department of State acknowledged this, designating the Federal Loan Agency as the office which would conduct the negotiations for the U.S. At the same time the Soviet Embassy asked for reassurances

74. Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, pp. 558, 791; and memorandum of conversation, Welles and Oumansky, August 21, 1941 (861.51/2874-½).

75. On this exchange of letters, see above, pp. 169-70.

76. The gold purchase agreement was not announced until September 18. See the *New York Times*, September 19, 1941, p. 2.

that discussions of raw material purchases would be without prejudice to the question of a loan, and Assistant Secretary Acheson complied with the request. On September 9 the Soviet Embassy informed the State Department that it had designated Amtorg as its representative in arranging the raw materials agreement with the Federal Loan Agency.⁷⁷

Jones's agency and other offices in Washington did considerable work throughout this time in paving the way for such an agreement. Will Clayton, recently brought to Washington by Jones to assist in defense work, supervised the Loan Agency activities in this respect, conferring on occasion with Harriman, Hopkins, and with Joseph Davies.⁷⁸ The Office of Production Management was also brought into the discussions and made some tentative plans to send a special representative to Moscow to "undertake a special review of the possibilities of mutual help between the United States and the Soviet Union in regard to raw materials which are needed by the United States."⁷⁹ The suggestion of Herbert Feis on July 3 that a raw materials agreement be explored seemed to be bearing fruit.

From the vantage-point of Soviet requests for aid, such arrangements were slowly progressing and seemed hardly sufficient as a real solution to the financial question. Oumansky vigorously pressed for action. On September 4 he called on Secretary Hull and made known his government's disappointment over the fact that, to date, the only financial assistance received had been an advance of \$10 million against future gold deliveries. Hull promised that everything possible would be done to solve the problem, whereupon Oumansky made an interesting admission. He stated that he had "made the mistake of his life in agreeing not to accept lease-lend benefits and advantages instead of paying cash or its equivalent for supplies in this country."⁸⁰ Hull's notes of the meeting mention only that the Secretary "made appropriate reply" to this and assured the Soviet diplomat that something would be done. Hull might have called to Oumansky's attention that the latter had not "agreed" to forego lend-lease benefits; he had specifically stated a preference for a loan.

With the date of the London and Moscow conferences approaching, the concern felt by Oumansky over the finance matter was shared by numerous American officials working with the aid program. Harriman was hopeful that the question could be answered before his departure for

77. *Foreign Relations, 1941, I*, 818-19, 830-31.

78. Davies, *Mission to Moscow*, pp. 499-500.

79. Memorandum of conversation, Mr. Winston of the OPM and Mr. Henderson of the Department of State, August 20, 1941. Copy in Roosevelt Library, Official File 220.

80. *Foreign Relations, 1941, I*, 827.

the conferences, as was General Burns of the lend-lease office. In a memorandum to Harriman on September 5, Burns stated that definite decisions were needed, and he pointed out that basically the matter was a political question. He suggested that if, as anticipated, the aid commitments to the U.S.S.R. through June 30, 1942, ran to approximately \$500 million, this be financed through an RFC loan. After that date, he continued, Soviet aid was likely to run into the billions and would probably have to be paid through lend-lease funds. Whatever the arrangements were to be, he wrote that "firm" political decisions were needed before the Moscow conference.⁸¹

The White House was reluctant to reach any "firm" decisions. Apparently, the President thought the domestic opposition to Soviet aid was of such strength that a real long-range decision on the matter was out of the question and that, for the time being, the gold purchase and raw materials purchase approaches offered the only fruitful possibilities. By the first week of September the Soviets were running so short on dollar exchange that some action was mandatory. Oumansky was summoned to the White House on September 11 for a discussion of the problem.

Hopkins advised the President, shortly before the meeting with Oumansky, that he inform the Soviet diplomat of the political difficulties involved in the aid program. Hopkins also suggested that the program could operate until December 1 or January 1, next, on the basis of gold and raw materials purchases. He recommended that this be the basis of action and that the President handle "the much larger problem of finance" at a later date.⁸² The President was apparently in agreement.

When Oumansky arrived at the White House on the morning of the eleventh, he was accompanied by Secretary Hull, who, along with Hopkins, sat in on the discussion in the President's office. The Russian rehearsed his country's urgent needs for supplies of all kinds and repeated his earlier request to Hull that the Soviet Union be included under the lend-lease program. He stated that what was needed were arrangements which would procure the maximum of military aid in the minimum time, whether through the "financial cooperation" of the RFC, further Treasury advances on gold deliveries, or lend-lease aid. In "bitter" terms he complained that the Soviet government had immediate need for \$140 million to finance outstanding orders but that Amtorg had dollar

81. Memorandum, General Burns to Harriman, "Methods of Financing and Procuring Aid for Russia," September 5, 1941 (Harriman Files).

82. Memorandum, Harry Hopkins to the President, September 11, 1941 (Roosevelt Library, President's Secretary File, Box 15).

balances of only \$160,000. His discussions with Jones to that date, he added, had resulted in no agreements whatever.⁸³

The President's response was to explain to the Ambassador that there were difficulties involved in securing authorization from Congress for a lend-lease grant to the U.S.S.R., because of the unpopularity of the Soviet Union and the hostility toward the Soviet Union on the part of "large groups" in the U.S. who had "great political power in Congress." It was in this connection that Roosevelt suggested that Moscow publicize the fact that the Constitution of 1936 granted freedom of religion. The President stated that to get a lend-lease proposal for Russia through Congress, he would need an official statement of Soviet assets and the amount of gold reserves that were held. In addition, he told the Ambassador that such a statement should include an estimate of the amount of barter that the two countries could carry on after the end of the war and remarked in that connection that the U.S. could purchase and pay for, in the near future, "maximum quantities" of such strategic commodities as manganese and chromium, on the understanding that production and delivery could be postponed until the war with Germany was over. Hull and Hopkins agreed that "there was no probability just now of a lend-lease provision for Soviet Russia on account of political difficulties."⁸⁴

This frank presentation of the matter by the President made it clear that he foresaw a difficult political struggle as likely to develop if lend-lease were requested for Russia. Apparently he anticipated that isolationists would, among other things, probe deeply into the question of Soviet finance, demanding a full statement of their available resources and insisting upon proof of dire need, just as they had done with reference to Great Britain in the debates and hearings over Lend-Lease earlier in the year. Remembering the long and arduous battle that the enactment of that law had entailed, with Britain envisaged as its primary beneficiary, he seems to have expected a debate of at least equal vigor over the inclusion of the U.S.S.R. With a vitally needed request for additional lend-lease funds soon to be sent to Congress, he was determined to avoid the issue.

Since the Russians were in such financial straits, action of some sort was urgently necessary if the aid program were to continue. Oumansky was therefore told that the immediate need would definitely be met through a credit and barter agreement. The next day, September 12, President Roosevelt wrote to Jesse Jones concerning Soviet needs for dollars with which to purchase supplies and giving this directive:

83. *Foreign Relations, 1941, I*, 833-34.

84. *Ibid.*

To assist the Russian Government in paying for war supplies which it wants to buy in the United States, and which it can get in limited quantities, and to expedite our own national defense program, I would like you to arrange through the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, or one of its subsidiaries, for the purchase from Amtorg Trading Corporation, a United States corporation owned by Russian interests, of manganese, chrome, asbestos, platinum and other articles and materials which we usually import from Russia up to the value of \$100,000,000 for delivery as rapidly as possible, with proper allowance for dislocation of transportation and of their productive facilities, and that advances up to \$50,000,000 be made against the purchase price. . . .⁸⁵

It was noteworthy that the President put deliberate stress upon a mutual aid aspect to this arrangement, pointing to the need of the U.S. to obtain the commodities in question as well as to Soviet need for dollars. Actually, of course, he had told Oumansky that delivery could await the end of the war, which was demonstrative of his real concern. The kernel of the agreement was the \$50 million cash advance which, linked to a pledge of commodity deliveries, circumvented the legal stipulations on collateral requirements for a standard RFC loan.

Jones acted promptly to comply with the wishes of the Chief Executive. Through the Defense Supplies Corporation, a subsidiary of the RFC, the barter agreement was negotiated with Andrei Gromyko as the Amtorg representative, and that same week the first installment—\$10 million—was advanced to the Soviet corporation.⁸⁶

On September 18 the President formally submitted to Congress the Second Defense Aid Supplemental Appropriation Bill, asking for \$5,985 million in additional funds for lend-lease operations. It could hardly have been coincidence that, on September 17, the letter to Jones directing the negotiation of the \$100 million barter agreement was released at a press conference held by the RFC chairman⁸⁷ and that on September 18 Treasury Secretary Morgenthau made public the fact that \$10 million had been advanced to the U.S.S.R. in August against future gold deliveries.⁸⁸ Quite clearly, every effort was being made to focus attention on the fact that Russia was not receiving lend-lease aid and to depict Russian aid as a separate undertaking. According to one account, the cash advance announcements were expected "to prevent a floor debate in Congress on the policy of aiding Russia, which leaders fear might be embarrassing to the

85. The full text of the letter is in the *New York Times*, September 18, 1941, p. 10.

86. An account of the agreement is given in Jesse H. Jones and Edward Angly, *Fifty Billion Dollars: My Thirteen Years with the R.F.C.* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1951), pp. 381-83.

87. George Bookman, *Washington Post*, September 18, 1941, p. 1.

88. *New York Times*, September 19, 1941, p. 1.

program of all-out aid to the Soviets."⁸⁹ Turner Catledge commented that the announcements made it clear that through "treating Russian aid separately, the Administration hopes . . . to avoid any undue controversy or delay in the new lend-lease appropriation."⁹⁰ The President had himself substantiated these impressions in his presentation of the second report to Congress on lend-lease operations on September 11. Therein, with reference to the Russo-German conflict, he had again praised the "gallant resistance of the Russian people" and stated: "We are using the energies of our Government to make available supplies which are urgently needed by Russia. By speeding deliveries and by arranging the quickest transportation of American materials, we are moving to strengthen the important Russian front. . . ." Having thus emphasized the importance attached to the furnishing of material aid to the U.S.S.R., he followed with the observation, already quoted in this chapter, that the Soviet government was paying for such aid with its own funds.⁹¹ While this was true enough to that date, it glossed over a multitude of policy issues.

This sudden outpouring of information relative to the financing of Soviet supply was generally construed to mean that some form of credit was in the offing to cover the Soviet aid program. The presumption was that an RFC loan was planned. Relative to this, it was recalled that Jesse Jones had told the House Banking Committee that same week, in testifying on a bill to increase RFC lending capacity:

I would be glad to help Russia in any way we could as long as she is fighting. . . .

I do not know whether authority is written into the law for a loan to Russia, but if it is in the law, if we could make a loan to Russia, a proper loan, I would make it; that is, I would personally favor it. . . .⁹²

HARRIMAN URGES A SETTLEMENT OF THE FINANCIAL QUESTION

As these events transpired, Averell Harriman and his delegation were engaged in the preliminary conferences at London on the supply offer to be presented at the Kremlin. Harriman continued to be concerned over the fact that he was preparing to make a commitment for enormous quantities of aid for the supply of which no financial arrangements had been made. He knew also that the Russians were keenly disappointed with the progress made in that regard. Further, the approach of the

89. George Bookman, *Washington Post*, September 18, 1941, p. 1.

90. *New York Times*, September 18, 1941, p. 1.

91. *Second Report under the Act of March 11, 1941*, p. iv.

92. House of Representatives, Committee on Banking and Currency, *Hearings on H.R. 5667, to Amend the R.F.C. Act, As Amended*, 77th Cong., 1st Sess. (1941), pp. 26-27.

Moscow conference coincided with a "supreme crisis" on the Russian front. The Germans claimed the capture of Kiev on September 19 and were preparing a mighty onslaught against Moscow. In London he found serious concern that a disaster might be impending.⁹³ While some American officials were apparently disposed to discount much of the gloom manifested in London as calculated to spur American efforts, there was no denying that Russia's military situation was indeed serious.⁹⁴

Shortly before his departure for Moscow, Harriman attempted once again to get a decision on the matter of underwriting the Russian supply program. On September 20 he sent two cables to the President on the subject, stating in one that he was "anxious" for a clarification of finance policy before he reached Moscow and in the other that his mission would likely be handicapped if it arrived in Moscow still uninstructed on that crucial aspect of the program.⁹⁵ To these Hopkins replied:

I believe that public opinion here with respect to aid for Russia is improving but it is not possible for the President to give you definite instructions with respect to the method of financing, although there is in his mind no doubt that it can be fully worked out and he will see that you are kept informed.⁹⁶

Hopkins himself by this time was disturbed over the predicament that faced Harriman and was advising action under lend-lease authority. The President held back. Although he was becoming convinced himself that this was the only answer, he was not willing to act until the lend-lease debates in Congress had measured the strength of the opposition. Some isolationist spokesmen had already served notice that they would attempt to amend the lend-lease appropriation to include a provision excluding Soviet Russia from its benefits. Despite the efforts to avoid it, a legislative debate on the Soviet aid program was foreshadowed. The resolution of American policy toward the Soviet Union was approaching a climactic point.

93. *New York Times*, September 19, 1941, p. 3; and see Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, p. 452.

94. Bertram D. Hulen, *New York Times*, September 20, 1941, p. 1; and Ernest K. Lindley, *Washington Post*, September 29, 1941, p. 9.

95. Telegrams, Harriman to the President, September 20, 1941 (Harriman Files).

96. Telegram, Hopkins to Harriman, September 21, 1941. *Ibid.*

X.

Lend-Lease to Russia: Final Decisions

THE MOSCOW CONFERENCE AND THE FIRST SUPPLY PROTOCOL

STILL UNINSTRUCTED as to how he should proceed in dealing with the question of paying for the supplies to be pledged to the Soviet government, and somewhat disquieted by that consequence of the American political climate, Harriman set sail for Moscow on September 22 in company with Lord Beaverbrook. Six days later the Moscow Supply Conference was formally convened at the Kremlin.

The conference was at times, in Harriman's words, "very hard sledging." It coincided, to be sure, with a grave military situation on the Russian front, which certainly cast its influence on the British and American delegations. Fears of a Soviet defeat, or surrender, weighed upon their minds. In the words of one of the members of the American group:

We were to do everything within the power of the two nations to keep the Russians fighting until Spring, when, rather optimistically, we hoped the Allied potential power could be applied in sufficient strength to draw off some of the pressure on the Soviets. In Mr. Harriman's words, "Give and give and give, with no expectation of any return, with no thought of a *quid pro quo*."¹

This approach met with a mixed response from the Russians, who blended their smiles with scowls and cordiality with ill-humor. Characteristically, virtually all negotiations of any importance took place with Stalin. The working committees of the two delegations found themselves generally unable to learn anything from their Soviet counterparts, and their meetings were frequently "protracted exercises in utter frustration."² Harriman and Beaverbrook met with Stalin three times,

1. William H. Standley and Arthur A. Ageton, *Admiral Ambassador to Russia* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1955), p. 63.

2. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 387.

on the evenings of September 28, 29, and 30. At the first of these they were met with a fairly cordial reception. The second was very trying. The third, where the supply schedules were finally agreed upon, ended on a note of friendly enthusiasm.

One source of the discourtesy and "hard sledding" sometimes encountered by the Americans and British was undoubtedly the critical situation at the front. The difficulties met went much deeper than this, however. Throughout the preceding months Prime Minister Churchill had endeavored to establish some degree of cordiality and confidence in his relationships with the Soviet dictator, but he had met with a noticeable lack of success. Although Britain had made conspicuous sacrifices of its own supplies and had relinquished its claims upon large quantities of lend-lease and other goods from the U.S., Stalin had not been impressed. His messages bore a tone, said Churchill, which was "surly, snarly, and grasping."³

Stalin had called upon Britain, beginning in July, to establish a second front and professed complete inability to comprehend why such a venture was beyond the realm of possibility. He did not make too much of this at the Moscow meetings, but he brought up on more than one occasion the question of peace objectives and political agreements between Russia and Britain. Any such discussions were studiously avoided by Beaverbrook. The British and the Americans were clearly not interested in attaching political conditions to the supply of aid. Quite the contrary. It is obvious that they were fearful that the Russians might present conditions of their own. If anything, the occasional injection of questions about war aims, indemnities, and the future of Germany on the part of Stalin only spurred the Anglo-American emissaries to bear down more heavily upon finding ways and means of fulfilling Soviet material needs and focusing the energies of the conferences upon that point. The fact that the military situation at the Russian front was so serious at precisely that time gave additional stimulus to this endeavor. Harriman was authorized to make known to the Russians the interest of the U.S. in the whole matter of Soviet-Polish relations, but he refrained from so doing.⁴ He raised the question of religious freedom with Stalin and requested some public statement with reference to Article 124 of the constitution. Aside from this, any intimation that concessions were being sought was scrupulously avoided by the Anglo-American negotiators.

3. Churchill has furnished a record of his correspondence with Stalin from June through September in *The Grand Alliance*, pp. 380-88, 454-66.

4. So Harriman told the Polish Ambassador to the United States. See Ciechanowski, *Defeat in Victory*, pp. 62-63.

They deemed it of the utmost importance to convince the Russians of their own good faith and to offer them every encouragement.

It would be an oversimplification to say that, in making known their desire for political agreements of various sorts, the Russians were merely engaging in a species of blackmail. Their intense desire for such accords had been for long made known both in London and in Washington. Following the Moscow Conference, Stalin pressed this intent with more zeal than ever, bluntly writing to Churchill on November 8:

I fully agree with you that clarity should be established in the relations between the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain. . . . The lack of clarity is the consequence of two circumstances: (a) There is no definite understanding between our two countries on war aims and on plans for the post-war organization of peace. (b) There is no agreement between the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain on mutual military assistance against Hitler in Europe. As long as there is no accord on both these questions there can be no clarity in the Anglo-Soviet relations. More than that: to be frank, as long as the present situation exists there will be difficulty in securing mutual confidence. Of course the agreement on military supplies to the U.S.S.R. has a great positive value, but it does not settle, neither does it exhaust, the whole problem of relations between our two countries. . . .⁵

The Americans, since they were still "neutrals," did not come in for such stern discourses as this. Stalin had not even presumed to address the President directly to that date, though Harriman told him that such communications would be welcomed. In Washington many American officials had felt the lash of Ambassador Oumansky's tongue with reference to the provision of aid, and the Soviet diplomat had informally made known something of the nature of his country's political objectives in the war with Germany.

The spirit of the American officials sent to Moscow was one disposed to "give and give and give, with no expectation of any return" save that of keeping Russia steadfastly in the fight against Hitler. Harriman and his colleagues did their utmost to supply the Soviets with what was asked of them and, when unable to do so in some categories, frequently tried to make up the difference by making more generous allotments in others.⁶ In this Harriman certainly had the enthusiastic support of General Burns, Colonel Faymonville, and William L. Batt, all of whom were in Moscow with him. Admiral Standley, it may be assumed, looked upon all this with some doubt. At the White House this emphasis upon the determination of the U.S. to support the Soviet defense

5. Quoted in Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, p. 529.

6. See Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 389.

was fully shared by both the President and Hopkins. Hopkins kept in the closest communications with the Moscow delegation, watching personally over all facets of the negotiations.⁷ Of Hopkins and General Burns, General John R. Deane has commented that they performed their mission in aiding the U.S.S.R. "with a zeal that approached fanaticism."⁸

One episode may be cited to illustrate this approach to the Moscow negotiations. In the course of the negotiations at the Kremlin, Stalin made it known that Russia had need of some four thousand tons of barbed wire a month from the U.S. Harriman immediately cabled this request to the White House, asking Hopkins to find out at once if such a commitment could be fulfilled. As soon as the message was received, at 5:25 on the evening of September 30, Hopkins telephoned Edward R. Stettinius and the Chief of the Metals Section of the OPM. Inquiries were made with all possible expedition, so that at 6:06 that same evening Hopkins was told that such a quantity of wire could be supplied, provided it were nongalvanized. Harriman was notified promptly.⁹

At the final session in the Kremlin on the night of September 30 Harriman and his colleagues found that their diligence met with cordiality on the part of their hosts. The session went very well—as if, wrote Beaverbrook, it were "sunshine after rain." The following day the Moscow Supply Protocol was duly signed, and the proceedings ended with a festive banquet where numerous toasts to allied unity were offered and where comradeship seemed to be the order of the day. To Churchill, Beaverbrook reported:

The effect of this agreement has been an immense strengthening of the morale of Moscow. The maintenance of this morale will depend on delivery. . . .

I do not regard the military situation here as safe for the winter. I do think that morale might make it safe.¹⁰

Harriman wrote after the conference of September 30:

The meeting broke up in the most friendly fashion possible. Stalin made no effort to conceal his enthusiasm. It was my impression that he was completely satisfied that Great Britain and America meant business. . . .

7. Shortly before the Moscow conference opened, Hopkins sent this memorandum to Stettinius: "I would like to be in direct touch with Harriman and the Mission in Moscow and any replies to Harriman's telegrams I would like to have sent through me and signed by me. . . ." Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 387.

8. John R. Deane, *The Strange Alliance: The Story of Our Efforts at Wartime Cooperation with Russia* (New York: The Viking Press, 1947), p. 91.

9. Telegram, Harriman to Hopkins, September 30, 1941 (Harriman Files); memorandum for file by James Buckley, October 1, 1941 (OLLA, Russia File).

10. Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, p. 470.

I left feeling that he had been frank with us and if we came through as he had been promised and if personal relations were retained with Stalin, the suspicion that has existed between the Soviet Government and our two governments might well be eradicated. . . .¹¹

To Roosevelt, Harriman cabled, upon the signing of the Protocol, that the conference closed "in an atmosphere of great enthusiasm by all who participated. Stalin sends you his personal thanks. He, personally, is much gratified."¹²

The Soviet dictator had reason for his gratification. To be sure, the original requests made for most items by the Russian government had to be "considerably reduced" and, in the instance of most of the categories, the Protocol stated that the amounts supplied would have to be further examined in Washington or London. Nevertheless, that a massive undertaking had been pledged could not be gainsaid. In reference to aircraft, the Soviet request for 400 monthly during the period of the agreement (October 1, 1941—June 30, 1942) was met in full; 1,100 tanks per month were asked for, and 500 per month were pledged; 4,000 tons of aluminum and 500 tons of rolled duraluminium per month were asked for, and 2,000 tons of aluminum per month from Canada were pledged, in addition to which, the Protocol stated, "Mr. Harriman will investigate the possibility of supplying from the U.S.A. 2,000 tons of aluminum and 500 tons of rolled duraluminium per month." Over-all, the Protocol called for the U.S. to ship 1,500,000 long tons of supplies to the Soviet Union over the nine month period, in contrast to the 128,038 tons which had been shipped from the Western Hemisphere during the months of June through August.¹³

The Protocol contained, in addition to the statements that the supply of certain items would have to be "investigated," a further provision which offered something of an escape clause for the two Western powers. This had to do with the question of actual delivery. The preamble to the agreement stated that the quantities stipulated would "be made available at British and U.S.A. centres of production" and that those two powers would "give aid to the transportation of these materials to the Soviet Union and will help with the delivery."¹⁴

11. Quoted in Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 391.

12. Telegram, Harriman to the President, October 1, 1941 (Harriman Files).

13. The full text of the Moscow Protocol is contained in *Soviet Supply Protocols* (Department of State Publication 2759, n.d.), pp. 3-12. For a tonnage breakdown month by month and by route of shipments from the U.S. to the U.S.S.R. from June, 1941, to the end of the wartime aid program, see the table in Motter, *The Persian Corridor and Aid to Russia*, pp. 480ff.

14. *Soviet Supply Protocols*, p. 3.

This was nothing more than a realistic allowance for the severe shortage of shipping which confronted the U.S. and Britain and for the tenuous lines of communication which existed to the Soviet Union. The U.S. and British governments actually bent their energies without stint to the fulfillment of the Protocol lists. In his final report to the President, Harriman stated that the mission had left "convinced" that the Russians could make "very effective use" of whatever was sent and that they would "continue to fight in retreat." He concluded: "It is believed that her continuation as an active belligerent is of paramount importance and that every effort should be made to assist her and assist her promptly. . . ." ¹⁵

The President hardly needed to be encouraged along these lines. With reference to the supply of munitions and military equipment, he instructed Secretary of War Stimson that he desired shipments to the U.S.S.R. that month to have priority over defense aid shipments to all countries. ¹⁶ As for these and all other items, Hopkins had given instructions to the lend-lease and other officials connected with Russian aid that the program was to be put through without delay. ¹⁷ With particular reference to machinery and materials categories, W. L. Batt submitted a memorandum to the Supply Priorities and Allocations Board, and he and Harriman both attended a meeting of the board on October 29. Batt told the board that, in the opinion of the mission, the "schedules are modest and can be achieved." He admitted that they entailed sacrifices from civilian production and from U.S. Army and Navy programs, but he held that such sacrifices were "justified." Both Hopkins and Harriman supported this view. The SPAB acted that same day to approve a materials and equipment list of \$270 million. This was some \$70 million short of the articles actually requested by the U.S.S.R. but was nevertheless an enormous supply operation. The minutes of the meeting stated:

It is the sense of the Board that it desires to see all possible aid accorded to the defense needs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, that the list of present requirements is approved subject to such minor adjustments as may be found necessary after further negotiations with the agencies con-

15. Report on Mission. Harriman to the President. October 29, 1941 (Roosevelt Library, Secretary's File, Box 15).

16. Watson, *Chief of Staff*, p. 329.

17. Memorandum, Philip Young to E. R. Stettinius, October 13, 1941 (OLLA, Russia File).

cerned, and that the listed items, as so modified, should be allocated without delay for immediate shipment.¹⁸

To cope with the limits imposed by the shipping shortage, the Russians were permitted by U.S. authorities to select from the over-all lists those items to which they assigned the highest priority, and shipping was assigned accordingly.¹⁹

The spirit with which the President and his chief aides entered into the entire program is perhaps best illustrated by the willingness to go beyond the terms of the Protocol itself where possible, in order to meet Soviet needs. During the course of the Moscow meetings Stalin had remarked that the war would be won by the forces having the best motor transport and he asked if a large number of "3-ton trucks" could be supplied. This item had not entered into the earlier U.S. and British calculations of supply possibilities, but when Harriman informed the White House of the request it was given immediate consideration. By the end of October the President notified Stalin that 5,600 trucks would be sent immediately and that 10,000 monthly would be sent to the end of the Protocol period.²⁰

THE WHITE HOUSE AND THE EXECUTIVE AGENCIES:
CONFLICTING APPROACHES TO THE U.S.S.R.

The intense concern of the President, Hopkins, Harriman, and the officials in the lend-lease office to fulfill to the letter—and even to go beyond where possible—the Moscow Supply Protocol was not shared throughout the executive branch. In general, the expediency of rendering assistance to the U.S.S.R. was willingly conceded, but there were persisting doubts and misgivings over the zeal and earnestness with which the White House and its agents approached the task.

Illustrative of this was the dissent produced by Soviet efforts to obtain in the U.S. plants and equipment for the manufacture of aviation gasoline and toluol. Many officials had serious misgivings over the wisdom of releasing such articles, some being doubtful of Soviet technical competence and some suspicious that it was a sample order to provide the nucleus of such an industry in the Soviet Union after the war. Philip Young reported in mid-October that, although Hopkins had instructed

18. *Minutes of the Supply Priorities and Allocations Board, September 2, 1941, to January 15, 1942* (Historical Reports on War Administration, WPB, Documentary Publication No. 3, 1946), p. 22; and memorandum of W. L. Batt to SPAB, "Approval of Materials and Equipment for Shipment to the U.S.S.R.," October 29, 1941 (Harriman Files).

19. *Industrial Mobilization for War*, I, 132.

20. Leighton and Coakley, *Global Logistics and Strategy, 1940-1943*, p. 101.

that the approved supply program be put through without delay, long delays were actually being encountered in that particular regard both because of the shortage of such materials and because of a certain amount of distrust and resistance to the work of the Soviet supply division.²¹ On November 5 the Department of State's Division of European Affairs had a cable dispatched to Moscow suggesting that the Russians agree to the assignment of U.S. technicians to supervise the construction of the cracking plants if such materials were to be released. When Harriman learned of this, his office made an immediate protest. His secretary, R. P. Meiklejohn, told an officer of the European Affairs Division that such an approach was unrealistic and that it would merely make the Russians suspicious of American goodwill. He asked that in the future Hopkins or Stettinius be consulted in all such matters.²²

This conflict in policy approach was brought most clearly into view in the circumstances attending the stationing of Colonel Faymonville in Moscow. Harry Hopkins arranged for the promotion of Faymonville to Brigadier General and his assignment to Moscow as the lend-lease representative at the conclusion of the Moscow Conference. Hopkins' outlook closely coincided with that of Faymonville, who could be counted on to do his utmost in behalf of the Russians. Moreover, Hopkins deeply distrusted the Military Attaché in Moscow, Major Yeaton.²³ Obviously he was seeking to organize the Soviet aid program in such a manner as to insure its control from the White House, thereby circumventing the countervailing policy approaches entrenched in other Washington quarters. The Faymonville assignment to Moscow was only one facet of the emerging design.

The President decided sometime during this period that he would name General Burns of the lend-lease office as the Ambassador to the U.S.S.R.²⁴ Burns was closely associated with Hopkins and enjoyed the fullest confidence of the presidential aide. In addition, the President began making arrangements in early October to provide technical assistance to the U.S.S.R. to instruct in the operation and maintenance of U.S. equipment. The War Department and General Burns agreed to the wisdom of such action—a logical arrangement. The President must have deduced from Stalin's remarks to Hopkins during the latter's visit

21. Memorandum, Young to Stettinius, October 13, 1941 (OLLA, Russia File). I have also used a memorandum of John N. Hazard to Stettinius, September 25, 1941 (in *ibid.*), concerning the same matter.

22. *Foreign Relations, 1941*, I, 860-61.

23. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp. 395-96.

24. Telegram, President Roosevelt to Steinhardt, November 5, 1941 (123 Steinhardt/380½).

to the Kremlin at the end of July that the Russians would welcome such a step. By the end of October the Air Corps and the Ordnance Department had recruited civilian crews for the assignment. In the War Department it was felt that such a mission should replace the civilian-controlled Faymonville mission, whose appointment had occasioned vigorous dissent in Washington.²⁵ Admiral Standley has said of it that it was "one of the unfortunate by-products" of the Moscow Conference and that the protests against the Faymonville appointment "were already vociferous by the time I returned to Washington" from Moscow.²⁶ The White House would not consent to the termination of this arrangement, so the War Department continued to plan for the dispatch of its own mission, which was to be headed by Major General John N. Greely. It was Burns who suggested Greely's appointment, and the apparent intent has been explained in this manner by T. H. Vail Motter:

General Greely has recorded that his appointment was suggested by General Burns. . . . At the time the USSR mission was established it was expected that Burns would become U.S. Ambassador to the USSR. Burns believed that there were distinct functions to be served by the Faymonville and Greely missions. Faymonville, with direct access to Harry Hopkins, would channel USSR requests into procurement and shipment; Greely, with War Department machinery behind him, would instruct the Russians in the use and maintenance of American lend-lease goods. It was believed that, as Ambassador, Burns could direct these complementary functions toward the single aim of aiding the USSR. . . .²⁷

The logical and clear-cut plans of General Burns, which sought an accommodation of White House and War Department outlooks, were to be frustrated. The Russians did not desire American instruction, so that the Greely mission—for this and other reasons—never entered the Soviet Union. It was the President's firm policy not to press Moscow in such matters. If the Russians did not want technicians, they did not have to accept them, since the White House was determined to avoid any implication of attaching political conditions upon the supply of material aid. Further, the President relented in his plan to appoint Burns as Ambassador. When Steinhardt was replaced it was by Admiral Standley, who was distinctly representative of the more conservative school. Evidently

25. Watson, *Chief of Staff*, pp. 329-30; and Motter, *The Persian Corridor and Aid to Russia*, pp. 65-67. Watson points out that the President was even preparing to send Army personnel to Russia if civilians were not obtainable. This idea met with "resistance" on the part of the General Staff.

26. Standley and Ageton, *Admiral Ambassador to Russia*, p. 237.

27. Motter, *The Persian Corridor and Aid to Russia*, p. 81, citing a letter of General Greely to the Chief of Military History, dated April 30, 1949.

this was a concession on the part of the President to the executive branch critics of his approach to the U.S.S.R. Faymonville remained in Moscow though the Greely mission shortly "expired in frustration."²⁸ Moscow's reluctance to admit it and the conflicting and uncoordinated policy plans in Washington helped to account for its demise.

It is worthwhile to note in passing that the President's method, whatever its merits or justification, entailed certain costs. By never even making a formal request for visas for the technical personnel assigned to the Greely mission, once the Russians made known their reluctance to enter into such an arrangement, a definite pattern was established. When, in November, requests were made for the admission of an American Red Cross group to Russia, the Vice-Commissar for Foreign Affairs told Ambassador Steinhardt that the Soviet government saw no reason why it should grant special favors inasmuch as the President had not insisted on privileges of any sort in granting aid to the U.S.S.R. Steinhardt rightly construed this as representative of a determined policy on the part of the Soviets and indicative of the fact that they would not make any operative concessions.²⁹

THE RELIGIOUS FRONTS: THE PRESIDENT SUSTAINS A LOSS

The President's greatest concern during these weeks when final decisions on the Soviet aid program were pending was not with the negotiating behavior of the Russians or with the critics of his policy within the Washington bureaucracy. He envisaged the greatest threat to his program as that represented by "the large groups in the United States who had great political power in Congress"—as he had expressed it to Oumansky. Starting at the end of September, he undertook diligent efforts to offset this opposition.

Convinced that the religious sensibilities of the American people were the foremost danger to the successful implementation of his Russian policies, the President prepared his campaign accordingly. Just as the Moscow Conference was in progress and as the House Committee on Appropriations began hearings on the second lend-lease appropriation bill, he arranged for the publication of a letter written by Polish Ambassador Ciechanowski to Secretary Hull, telling of the assignment of Catholic and Jewish chaplains to Polish army contingents in the Soviet Union. The Ambassador's letter, written upon the personal request of the Presi-

28. On the Greely mission, see the detailed account in *ibid.*, pp. 65-81. Since its purpose was never defined in relationship to the Faymonville mission, and since the plan to name Burns as Ambassador never materialized, Motter speaks of it as "Conceived in logic, born in ambiguity, . . . and doomed to the functionlessness of a fifth wheel on a cart."

29. Telegram, Steinhardt to Hull, November 11, 1941 (copy in the Harriman Files).

dent, was released to the press by the Department of State on September 30.³⁰

That same morning the President held a regularly scheduled press conference. Naturally the Ciechanowski letter was mentioned and the President asked to comment. Roosevelt first replied that the letter "speaks for itself," but he went on to expand on its theme and purport—as he construed them—and in so doing generated a veritable storm. This was the exchange that took place:

The President: . . . As I think I suggested a week or two ago, some of you might find it useful to read Article 124 of the Constitution of Russia.

Question: What does it say, Mr. President?

The President: Well, I haven't learned it by heart sufficiently to quote—I might be off a little bit, but anyway: Freedom of conscience—

Question: Would you say—

The President: Freedom of religion. Freedom equally to use propaganda against religion, which is essentially what is the rule in this country; only, we don't put it quite the same way. . . .³¹

To illustrate his point, the President continued by pointing out that a sidewalk orator could mount his box on a Washington corner and inveigh for or against religious doctrine and be within his constitutional rights.

The effect of these remarks was instantaneous, and one which the Chief Executive had certainly not anticipated. Religious leaders of many faiths immediately spoke out against the notion that governmental policies toward religion were almost the same in the U.S.S.R. as in the U.S. Methodist Bishop Raymond J. Wade of Detroit branded the comments made on Article 124 as "utterly misleading" and "obviously untrue."³² Bishop Adna Wright Leonard of Washington, D.C., declared that the President had been "utterly mistaken" in saying that religious freedom was known to Soviet Russia.³³ The Wisconsin District Brotherhood of the American Lutheran Church blasted the statement also as an "utter falsehood" if it were intended to imply before the American people that religious freedom existed in the U.S.S.R.³⁴

From Catholic circles came comments equally barbed. *The New World*, official organ of the archdiocese of Chicago, stated: "In practice

30. The text of the letter is given in the *Department of State Bulletin*, V (1941), 245-46.

31. The text of this portion of the press conference is in *ibid.*, p. 246.

32. *Washington Post*, October 2, 1941, p. 2.

33. *Ibid.*, October 12, 1941, p. 11.

34. A letter from the organization was read into the *Congressional Record* (LXXXVII, 8172-73) by Senator Wiley (R., Wis.).

the regimes of Lenin and Stalin have leveled the most ruthless drive against Christianity since the days of Diocletian." To discuss the point on the basis of the written word in Article 124 of the Soviet Constitution, it commented, was to engage in "sophistry."³⁵ Monsignor Sheen said that the President was "ill-informed."³⁶ Monsignor Edmund J. Walsh, of Georgetown University, made the most extended commentary upon the press conference remarks. He issued a lengthy statement which pointed out in great detail the differences in the religious freedom clauses of the Stalin Constitution and those of Amendment I of the Constitution of the United States and further elaborated upon the disparity between actual practice of the Soviet government and the "paper guarantees" of its ostensible basic law.³⁷

Isolationists pounced on the President's words and took him severely to task. America First retaliated by publishing a newspaper advertisement which consisted chiefly of excerpts from an article written by Monsignor Sheen in *The Sign* in 1937, wherein the persecution of religion by the Bolsheviks was recounted in vivid terms. The advertisement, which omitted any mention of the date of the Sheen article, sarcastically referred to the President's remarks as an "amazing Certificate of Character."³⁸

The *Chicago Tribune* angrily dismissed Roosevelt's remarks as an effort to picture the "Georgia blood-shedder" as a "Christian gentlemen," but it confidently commented that the President had made one of his "worst blunders."³⁹ In Congress, Senator Nye had this to say:

The whole thing is just an effort to offset the loss of religious freedom in the conference between the President and Prime Minister Churchill at sea. Although both . . . later reaffirmed that freedom in their own countries, they left it out of their joint statement out of consideration for Stalin.

And Congressman Fish suggested that the President invite Stalin to Washington where he "might be baptized in the swimming pool at the White House," following which all present could enroll in the "Stalin Sunday school."⁴⁰

35. Quoted in an article by the Reverend John Evans in the *Chicago Tribune*, October 3, 1941, p. 12.

36. Quoted in the *New York Times*, October 14, 1941, p. 4.

37. The text of Msgr. Walsh's statement is in the *Washington Post*, October 2, 1941, p. 2. Convenient summaries of the reaction to the September 30 press conference are in "Storm over Religion Rocks Boat on Policy of Aid to Battling Russians," *Newsweek*, XVIII (October 13, 1941), 15-17; and "Pointing to the Record," *United States News*, XI (October 10, 1941), 28-29.

38. *New York Times*, October 3, 1941, p. 12.

39. *Chicago Tribune*, October 4, 1941, p. 12.

40. *New York Times*, October 5, 1941, p. 17.

Fight for Freedom took it upon itself to answer the sally of America First. It retorted with a newspaper advertisement pointing out that the Sheen article was "history" and quoting excerpts from speeches of Bishop Hurley, Bishop Griffin, and Associate Justice Murphy. Its broadside concluded with the charge that "Axis-Firsters" were attempting to intimidate American Catholics into silence in the fight against Hitler.⁴¹

Most interventionists were critical of the President's excursion into the realm of Soviet constitutionalism. His supporters in Congress, engaged in fending off efforts of some isolationists to exclude the Russians from the benefits of lend-lease, did not consider that their task had been facilitated, and said little of the affair. The interventionist press strongly criticized the comments on Article 124, reasoning generally that a realistic regard for national security was ample ground for the policy of aiding Russia and that there was no need for going beyond that. These were illustrative comments:

Philadelphia Evening Bulletin:

There is only one reason for aiding Russia, and that is the principle of assisting a wolf whose present fight is helpful to our cause. His home life is his own affair, but pulling a sheepskin over his shaggy ears will deceive no one as to his true character.⁴²

Omaha Evening World-Herald:

[The President's comments were] whitewash. . . . We realize that the bolshevik is walking in our direction along an exceedingly dangerous road, and common prudence indicates that the two of us ought to cooperate in self-defense. That's all.⁴³

Rochester Times-Union:

It is important that this nation think clearly, that we recognize our aid for Russia for what it is, a matter of military strategy, and not attempt to delude ourselves into the belief that the Soviet shares our democratic way.⁴⁴

Washington Post:

[Aid for Russia] is based solely on the belief that our own defenses will be strengthened to the extent that Russia succeeds in weakening Hitler's war machine. Let us leave it that way.⁴⁵

St. Louis Post-Dispatch:

[The aid program] certainly needs no lame defense in the field of religion.⁴⁶

41. *Ibid.*, October 4, 1941, p. 11.

42. October 2, 1941, p. 15.

43. October 3, 1941, p. 24.

44. Quoted in "Aid for Russia: Religious Issue as a Factor," *United States News*, XI (October 17, 1941), 25.

45. October 2, 1941, p. 14.

46. October 7, 1941, Sec. III, p. 2.

The White House was shaken by the "hostile public reception" which met the discussion of Article 124. On October 2 it took the unusual step of releasing the transcript of that portion of the September 30 press conference, along with a statement explaining that this had been done because of the "conflicting interpretations" which the President's remarks elicited. The White House statement also attempted to put the remarks in an entirely new light. As Arthur Krock wrote, the reporters had interpreted the President's words as meaning that religious freedom was already the rule in Russia. The Chief Executive had also created the "impression," thought Krock, that he had knowledge of things other than the Polish chaplains affair upon which to base his statement on Article 124.⁴⁷ The October 2 White House release explained that it was hoped that an "entering wedge for the practice of complete freedom of religion is definitely on its way" in the Soviet Union.⁴⁸

This statement made it clear that, in the midst of the unfavorable response to the September 30 comments, the President was seizing upon the only hopeful note sounded by religious critics of his policy. Monsignor Walsh, in his lengthy statement of October 1 on Article 124 had said that if the President had intended by his remarks to obtain from Moscow genuine concessions in behalf of religious freedom, then his efforts would be strongly supported. The noted Catholic priest wrote: "If he can achieve this fine service for humanity, I am confident that he will receive a new measure of support from certain quarters which may astonish him and which will prove a precious ally in the momentous crisis now facing the American people."⁴⁹

Whatever the purpose which the President had had in mind in his discourse upon Article 124, this was the direction in which he moved with dispatch. A message was sent to Harriman and Steinhardt in Moscow, with this instruction:

In view of the outstanding importance of this question [*i.e.*, religious freedom in the U.S.S.R.] from the standpoint of public opinion in this country the President earnestly hopes that from the highest authorities of the Russian Government you may be able to secure some statement that can be sent to this country's press which would be confirmatory of and responsive to, the statement contained in . . . [the remarks at the September 30 press conference].

Please make every effort to see that the Soviet authorities make some statement of this kind at the earliest moment possible.⁵⁰

47. *New York Times*, October 3, 1941, p. 22.

48. *Washington Post*, October 3, 1941, p. 1.

49. Quoted in the *Washington Post*, October 2, 1941, p. 1.

50. Telegram, Hull to Harriman and Steinhardt, October 2, 1941 (copy in Harriman Files).

On that same day—October 2—the President made public the fact that Harriman had been instructed to take up the matter of religious freedom in Moscow. He also conferred at the White House with Monsignor Michael J. Ready, general secretary of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, who, after the conference, praised the President's efforts. He said that the earlier comments about Article 124 had led to "confusion and anxiety" but that the knowledge of this instruction to Harriman would be received by all Americans as "welcome reassurance."⁵¹

Harriman and Steinhardt diligently sought to carry out the President's wishes. In a lengthy memorandum Harriman wrote that throughout his stay in Moscow he had taken "every occasion" to explain the importance of American public opinion toward Russia with specific reference to the question of religious freedom. In conferences with all Soviet officials with whom he came into contact, he stressed the need for some statement or action which would "indicate to America that the Soviets were willing to allow freedom of worship not only in letter but in fact."⁵² On October 4, in a message to Hull advising the Secretary of these efforts and of the fact that Stalin, Molotov, and Oumansky had agreed to act upon the matter, Harriman commented: "I have, on leaving, the feeling that the Russians will give lip service to meet the President's wishes and make a few gestures, but they are not prepared yet to allow freedom of religion in the sense that we understand. . . ."⁵³ Ambassador Steinhardt, he added, concurred in this view.

Harriman had accurately called the play. The Soviet government had already made several expedient gestures in this direction, such as suspending the publications of the old League of Militant Atheists, ostensibly on the ground that it was to conserve scarce paper stocks.⁵⁴ Radio Moscow unleashed the curious charge that the Nazis were the foes of Christianity in some of its propaganda broadcasts, and *Pravda* contained such unlikely fulminations as: "The barbarous Fascist hordes, drunk with blood, turn into ridicule the religious sentiments of women—Catholic and Protestant, desecrating churches and violating the sacred vessels. . . ." Such comments were cited even by the Reverend M. Leopold Braun, the only American priest in Russia and Administrator Apostolic *Ad Interim*, as indications of a religious revival in the Soviet Union.⁵⁵

51. Frank L. Kluckhohn, *New York Times*, October 4, 1941, p. 1.

52. Sherwood, in *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp. 391-93, gives the text of this interesting document.

53. Telegram, Harriman to Hull, October 4, 1941 (copy in the Harriman Files).

54. Cyrus L. Sulzberger, *New York Times*, October 7, 1941, p. 12.

55. The quoted remarks from *Pravda*, and other comments of a similar nature, are in a letter from Msgr. Braun to Myron Taylor, dated October 3, 1941 (in the Harriman Files).

That the Soviet government was actually making no change in its doctrine or practice was fully borne out in the statement finally issued relative to Article 124, in compliance with the American request. This statement, delivered to the press by Vice-Commissar of Foreign Affairs Lozvosky on October 4, actually detracted from the favorable impressions conveyed by such actions as the suspension of atheist journals. The salient portions of Commissar Lozvosky's announcement stated:

. . . The President correctly pointed out the basic principles of the constitution of the U.S.S.R. on the freedom of worship of Soviet citizens. In the Soviet Union the church is separate from the State. This means the State gives no advantage to this or that religion. . . .

There is freedom of worship in the U.S.S.R. This means any Soviet citizen may adhere to any religion, which is a matter for the conscience of each citizen. . . . Religion is a private affair for the Soviet citizen in which the State does not interfere and considers it unnecessary to interfere. . . .⁵⁶

American religious leaders, and the American interventionist press, reacted strongly against this pronouncement that religious freedom was an existing fact in Soviet doctrine and practice. Dr. Luther A. Weigle, President of the Federal Council of Churches—the leading interdenominational Protestant organization—stated that the actual meaning of Article 124 was “that the right of propaganda is recognized for the forces that oppose religion but not for religion itself, which is robbed even of its proper means of defense.”⁵⁷ The New York Chapter of the Knights of Columbus said the Lozvosky statement would have been laughable “if the facts were not so tragic.”⁵⁸ Monsignor Walsh condemned it as “tantamount to a scotching of President Roosevelt's hopes that true freedom of religion might be recognized in Russia.” Article 124 he dismissed as a “hollow shell” and he put this challenge before the Chief Executive: “There is only one voice left to be heard from now. There is much potential dynamite in the present situation, but there is still much confidence, too, that moral courage, strength and honesty will rise to meet the Soviets' unreasonable arrogance.” The time had come, concluded the noted clergyman, to tell the Soviets, “not in words alone, but by deeds,” that freedom was as essential in Russia as it was in all nations.⁵⁹

Such was the inauspicious result of the President's efforts to gain some concession from the Soviet government on the question of religious freedom. Of course, the President had no intention of following the sug-

56. The full text is in the *New York Times*, October 5, 1941.

57. *New York Times*, October 6, 1941, p. 5.

58. *Ibid.*

59. The full text of Walsh's statement is *ibid.*, p. 4.

gestion of Monsignor Walsh, or other clergymen such as Fulton J. Sheen,⁶⁰ that aid be conditioned upon some operative concession in this sphere. There continued to be the greatest interest in the problem in official quarters, and there probably was a continued hope that Stalin might rectify the impression of the Lozvosky pronouncement. When it was reported that Stalin had made some reference to God in a toast at the Kremlin banquet ending the Moscow Conference, Harriman cabled back to Steinhardt on October 10 to ask if the toast had been correctly translated and was answered that the dictator had indeed said of President Roosevelt "God help him," or words to that effect.⁶¹ This was hardly sufficient to warrant any further expositions of the status of religion in the Soviet Union, and the President refrained from any repetition of his earlier gambit.

THE RELIGIOUS FRONT: THE PRESIDENT SCORES A VICTORY

In the wake of these developments, isolationist efforts to mobilize religious sentiment against the President's policies were pressed with vigor. These forces were hopeful of scoring a significant victory in the running debate through means of a poll of the Roman Catholic clergy conducted in September and October. Directed by the Catholic Laymen's Committee for Peace and financed by the America First National Committee, this operation consisted of mailing to some 34,616 priests a standard form making two inquiries. The clergymen were asked first, if they approved U.S. participation in a "shooting war" outside the confines of the Western Hemisphere; and, second, if they favored the policy of aiding Soviet Russia. Congressman Hamilton Fish triumphantly told the Newman Club Federation of New York on October 5 that "90 per cent of the priests" had given a negative response to both queries.⁶² When the final results were made known, it developed that, while slightly over 90 per cent of the returned questionnaires were opposed to both propositions, only 13,155 of the total number had made any reply at all. In addition, the whole affair was subjected to some sharp criticisms from Catholic circles who objected to the obvious partisanship of the poll (the chairman of the Laymen's Committee was also chairman of the Brooklyn chapter of America First) and who expressed deep misgivings about

60. Monsignor Sheen wrote in *America* that aid should be conditioned upon the restoration of freedom to all persons imprisoned in Russia for religious causes, and the restoration of all church property confiscated by the Soviet government. Reported in the *New York Times*, October 14, 1941, p. 4.

61. Harriman's message to Steinhardt and the reply dated October 11 are in the Harriman Files.

62. *New York Times*, October 6, 1941, p. 8.

any attempt to make it appear that the Catholic priesthood as a group stood in opposition to the announced foreign policies of the President of the United States.⁶³

Whatever the efficacy of this maneuver, the fact was that the President had by this time actually scored a victory of immense importance in his effort to disarm religious opposition to aid for Russia. Despite the debacle that attended his effort to gain some gesture from Moscow relative to religious freedom, decisive support for his program was forthcoming from powerful religious leaders.

On October 21 a petition sponsored by Dr. Kenneth Leslie, editor of the *Protestant Digest*, was delivered to the White House. Addressed to the President, and signed by one thousand Protestant churchmen and educators, the manifesto declared:

You have undertaken to assist these defenders [China, Britain, and Russia] with material aid. We pledge you our moral support and our prayers that this aid be effective and lightning-swift. We join our petition with those of the English Church and the Russian Orthodox Church for the people of Russia, the Red Army, and the Soviet leaders.

Therefore, at this moment when your representatives and the representatives of Great Britain have met with the heroic defenders of Russia and have worked out quick and effective means of coordination between the three countries to the end commonly desired, we simply want you to know that we will not permit ourselves or our people to be confused by those opposing voices, who although speaking the language of democracy, speak the mind of the enemy.

We believe with you that if Hitler can be stopped in Russia, a great victory will have been achieved for the western democracies, for the undaunted Chinese, and for ourselves.

Whatever sacrifices you may lay upon us we shall more than gladly accept.⁶⁴

The President had ample reason to be deeply gratified by this forceful expression of support, signed by such men as Bishop William T. Manning, Bishop Wallace Conklin, Dr. John R. Mackay, Bishop Mercer Green, and Dr. Roswell G. Ham.

Of even greater significance was the outcome of Myron Taylor's special mission to the Vatican. Returning to the U.S. early in October, Taylor reported to the President that the Pontiff had given a "sympathetic" reception to the presentation of the case for supporting the Soviet war

63. See the editorials on the "Clergy Poll," in the *Commonweal*, XXXV (October 31, 1941), 37-38.

64. Quoted in the *New York Times*, October 21, 1941, p. 7. A partial list of the signers is also given in the *Times* account.

effort against Nazi Germany. Although the Pope must have harbored some profound doubts about the optimistic viewpoint of the President concerning the future of religion in Soviet Russia, he agreed to render an interpretation of *Divini redemptoris* which would draw a distinction between aiding the Russian nation and aiding Communist ideology.⁶⁵ Coincident with the negotiation of the Moscow Protocol, the President was provided with assurances that, in effect, the Holy See itself would inform the faithful that the encyclical on atheistic communism did not make it immoral to send aid to Russia under existing circumstances.

In an allocution given in September, the Pontiff re-affirmed the historic position of the Church in its condemnation of Communist doctrine and in its denunciation of the violations of civil and religious liberties committed by the Soviet government. The allocution also made it clear that the Holy See looked upon the people of Russia with "paternal affection." The Pope did not enter into a discussion of these matters in the letter written to the President which Taylor brought back from the Vatican, but Taylor was appraised of the developments. In addition, this elaboration of the meaning of *Divini redemptoris* was sent to the Apostolic Delegate in Washington.⁶⁶

The effects of the allocution were not long in forthcoming. Its influence was clearly discernible in an editorial which appeared in the *Michigan Catholic* on October 30, wherein isolationists and "some Catholic publicists" were charged with taking from context certain passages of the encyclical of Pius XI "in an attempt to convince Catholics and others that opposition to our Government's policy on the Russian question is based on papal authority and, therefore, incumbent on every Catholic."⁶⁷

The most authoritative discussion of the matter came that same week in a pastoral letter written by Archbishop John T. McNicholas of Cincinnati. The Archbishop wrote to the priests and laity of his archdiocese: "If we keep in mind the clear distinction that Pope Pius made between the system of atheistic communism, which he condemned, and the Russian people, whom he loved, we shall be able to rid ourselves of much perplexity regarding the Russian situation. . . ." Turning then to a discussion of the broad context of the encyclical, Archbishop McNicholas asserted:

65. Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, pp. 796-97.

66. *Ibid.*, and Taylor (ed.), *Wartime Correspondence Between President Roosevelt and Pope Pius XII*, pp. 57-58.

67. The text of the editorial was placed in the *Congressional Record* (LXXXVII, 8700-1) by Senator Murray (D., Mont.).

However strongly we condemn sovietism and all the satanic crimes that can be charged to it, we must not, from the words of Pope Pius XI, say that the great and courageous Pope was laying down a course of action governing our country and all other countries regarding every future circumstance whatsoever, especially in a war of defense.

We must not forget that the suffering and persecuted people of Russia, deprived of freedom and put in bondage, have still some rights.⁶⁸

So perished the great dread of the President that the encyclical of Pius XI would provide a sanction for equating aid to Russia with aid to communism and thereby permit his opponents to insist with telling force that his program was in conflict with the doctrines of the church.

Secure in this knowledge, it might have been expected that the President would desist from any further attempts to justify his actions toward Russia as a defense of religious and other freedoms. But this would have meant a casting off of the mantle of idealism with which he had labored to envelop his foreign policies. It would have meant, in a sense, that the aid program to Britain and China, and all belligerents save the Soviet Union, he could defend as aid to the cause of democracy and freedom—to the fulfillment of the new world where the four freedoms would thrive; whereas aid to the Soviet Union would lie in a separate category, justified only in terms of self-interest. Although the interventionist press in general seemed to prefer it that way, as did a multitude of officials within the executive branch, the President was not content to leave it at that. The Kremlin had dashed his hopes for a magnanimous gesture to the kingdom of the spirit, but the ideologues of National Socialism furnished him in October with the means of linking the cause of religious freedom with the efforts of all men who fought the good fight against Hitler's Germany.

This came about in the transmission to the President on October 15 of a copy of a thirty-point program for a National Church of Germany that had been prepared by Alfred Rosenberg. Roosevelt promptly had copies of the document sent to leading members of the Catholic hierarchy and to the Vatican.⁶⁹ It was read to the National Council of the Y.M.C.A. by Assistant Secretary of State Berle when he addressed that group on October 25.⁷⁰ And on October 27, in his Navy Day speech, the President gave the matter his personal attention. Depicting the kind of world that could be expected if Hitler were victorious, Roosevelt announced

68. Quoted in the *New York Times*, October 31, 1941, p. 6. The complete text was placed in the *Congressional Record* (LXXXVII, A5049-51) by Senator Mead of New York.

69. Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p. 818.

70. *Department of State Bulletin*, V (1941), pp. 347-50.

possession of a document which divulged a Nazi plan "to abolish all existing religions," to establish in their stead a new creed wherein the words of *Mein Kampf* would supplant the Bible as Holy Writ, the swastika and the naked sword the Cross of Christ. The President asked all Americans to ponder deeply the terrible impact of these sinister designs.⁷¹

Assured by some of the most influential spokesmen of American Protestantism of their unremitting support for his policies of aiding all enemies of Germany, including Soviet Russia; enabled to advance with confidence his thesis that German Nazism was the deadliest foe of Christendom; and, above all, having obtained from the Holy See an interpretation of *Divini redemptoris* which differentiated between aiding Russia and aiding the cause of atheistic communism—then the President could consider that the religious obstacles in the way of his Soviet aid program had finally been successfully surmounted.

EXECUTIVE STRATEGY ON THE LEGISLATIVE FRONT

These successes came simultaneously with a spectacular victory for the President's Russian policies during the Congressional debates on the second lend-lease appropriation bill and the legislation increasing the lending capacity of the RFC. The combined effect of these interrelated occurrences was to leave the way clear for the Chief Executive to declare the U.S.S.R. eligible for lend-lease aid and to allocate lend-lease funds for the implementation of the Moscow Supply Protocol.

At the time the second lend-lease bill was laid before Congress on September 18, the White House seemed to be taking pains to portray the Russian aid program as something separate and distinct, financed through other means, and not germane to the immediate question of providing more money for lend-lease operations. As has been shown in previous chapters, from June 22 onward no spokesmen for the White House had given any intimation that Russia was scheduled for such assistance, and as late as September 30, with the Moscow Supply Conference in session, when reporters asked Roosevelt if he intended to put Russia under the lend-lease program his reply was: "I don't know. That is the thing that nobody knows at the present time."⁷² Nor would he consent to giving any instructions to Harriman, on the subject of finance, before the latter's departure for the Soviet capital.

The continued postponement of any decision on this matter created numerous problems for the officials involved in executing the aid program.

71. The Navy Day Speech is in the *New York Times*, October 28, 1941, p. 4.

72. Roosevelt Library, President's Personal File 1-P, Press Conferences, 1941, XVIII.

As has been pointed out elsewhere in this study, exclusion from lend-lease left the Soviet program not only without sufficient financial support but also led to complex legal problems in the release of military supplies. Early in October, shortly after the signing of the Moscow Protocol, a conference was called in the War Department to canvass these legal difficulties and to explore means of surmounting them. Stettinius, Oscar Cox, General Spalding, and John Hazard met with Harry Hopkins, Assistant Secretary Patterson, and Colonel Aurand. The group finally agreed that aircraft and tanks consigned to the Soviet Union would be turned in on exchange contracts under a law of 1926 which authorized sales of old equipment against new purchases on order. Ordnance would then make arrangements for the sale of these and other military items to the Russians. A committee was designated to see the Attorney General for a ruling on the legality of this procedure, and, if it were ruled illegal, then it was agreed that the only recourse would be to use exchange contracts under the Act of June 28, 1940—the Walsh Amendment. The difficulty with this latter procedure was that it entailed a declaration from the Chief of Staff that the items in question were not essential to the national defense. This was an extremely awkward and embarrassing arrangement for General Marshall, to say the least, and there was always the danger that it might lead to some form of legislative reprisals. It was a recognition of these difficulties that had led Secretary Stimson to recommend to the President as early as September 12, when he submitted the initial list of articles that could be consigned to Russia by June 30, 1942, that the Soviet program be included under lend-lease. If this were done the goods could be transferred under the “Billion Three” clause by the device of “juggling” contracts originally placed by the War Department earlier in the year, removing the need for the involved process of “surplus” certificates or for other improvisations.⁷³

Harry Hopkins had been influenced by such considerations as these to add his voice to those urging upon the President a declaration of Soviet eligibility for lend-lease. By the time of the opening of the Moscow Conference, Hopkins was addressing himself to Roosevelt on this point. Indicative of his dissatisfaction with the expediences being resorted to and his fear that the financial and legal uncertainties surrounding the program were becoming serious impediments, was his complaint on September 26—according to Harold Ickes—that \$50 million in additional

⁷³ Coakley, *The Army and Early Lend-Lease Operations*, MS; and Winnacker, *The Office of Secretary of War under Henry L. Stimson*, MS, I, 73.

goods could have been procured that afternoon for Russia if the necessary funds had been available.⁷⁴

President Roosevelt was not willing to take such a step, however, at least while the lend-lease appropriation was pending. He no doubt was convinced that the inclusion of the U.S.S.R. would lead to a long and heated debate in Congress, which would have the effect of delaying the provision of needed funds for lend-lease. Moreover, it would have provided an unseemly background for the negotiations at the Kremlin where the American delegation was laboring to convince the Soviet leaders beyond peradventure that the U.S. meant "business" in its pledge of aid. To Hopkins he was quoted as saying, when the latter pressed for the lend-lease authorization, that he "could not handle it now on the Hill."⁷⁵ To avoid these hazards which he envisaged, he continued to improvise—an art in which he excelled—and, if not to resort to dissimulation, at least to leave the status of the Soviet aid program ensconced in a wall of ambiguity.

Fortunately for the President's policies, as matters turned out, some isolationists in Congress decided to force a debate on the merits of supplying aid to Soviet Russia in conjunction with the legislative debates on the second lend-lease appropriation. Simultaneously with the transmission of the measure to Congress, there were reports that such a move was impending. On September 21 Senator Clark (D., Ida.) stated that an amendment excluding Russia from any lend-lease benefits had been discussed in meetings of the "non-interventionist group" and that he expected some such amendment would be proposed.⁷⁶ Three days later Congressman Stephen A. Day, the ultra-conservative Illinois Republican who leaned toward Russophobia, announced that the amendment would definitely be introduced in the House. Hamilton Fish declared his support for the amendment.⁷⁷

Thereby notice was served that the issue was to be forced. The President's strategy, in this circumstance, was to refrain from providing his critics with a specific target. He would not admit any definite plan to include Russia, nor did any executive spokesmen—although some did announce that they would be in favor of lend-leasing Russian aid. He evidently planned to leave the determination of financing suspended, while working to defeat the amendment. This would weaken the effectiveness of his opponents' case; and, if and when the amendment were defeated, he

74. See Ickes' notes of the Cabinet meeting of that date, in his *Secret Diary*, III, 20.

75. Quoted in Langer and Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, pp. 797-98.

76. *New York Times*, September 22, 1941, p. 3.

77. Robert C. Albright, *Washington Post*, September 25, 1941, p. 1.

could claim a mandate to use lend-lease to finance the Moscow agreements. In the meantime, while the question was still under consideration in Congress, he would keep the Russians supplied with indispensable dollar balances through cash advances against deliveries of gold and raw materials. The President made some efforts to ascertain the status of Soviet gold holdings, in part, no doubt, to determine the extent to which they could pay their own way. He told Oumansky on September 11 that a statement of gold holdings would be necessary before lend-lease funds could be allocated for Russia's benefit. The broader context indicates that the President was also thinking in terms of disarming domestic critics of his Russian program, since he could not have forgotten the financial revelations that Britain had been required to make in the lend-lease debates of January-March. Certainly Roosevelt was not disposed to drive a hard bargain with the Kremlin with reference to any form of consideration for the aid supplied, and it is difficult to believe that he intended to do so with specific reference to gold. Apparently, however, he resented some information given to him by Oumansky on the subject.

All these factors are brought out in statements of two of the President's associates dealing with the problem of Soviet finance. Secretary of the Interior Ickes has left this account of a Cabinet discussion of September 26:

There was talk about the gold reserves the Russians might have and we are to make an attempt to find out what they amount to. In connection with this discussion the President referred to Ambassador Oumansky as "a dirty little liar." . . . It seemed to be the desire that Russia turn over to us what gold she has, which would go to pay for goods here up to the limit of that reserve and from that point on we would purchase goods or make advances under the new lease-lend bill which is pending. There will undoubtedly be a fight to exclude Russia from the benefits of this act, but there seemed to be a feeling of confidence that the bill would pass.⁷⁸

And on October 15, some three weeks later, Harry Hopkins wrote to Loy Henderson at the Department of State:

The final determination as to how the Soviet purchases are to be handled in this country is held up pending the passage of the Lend-Lease Bill [*i.e.*, the second lend-lease appropriation]. No mention should be made, however, that our Government is going to use the Lend-Lease Bill to finance Russian purchases. Harriman was to secure certain information which may lead this

⁷⁸ Ickes, *Secret Diary*, III, 620.

Government to insist that the Soviets sell us a stated amount of gold each month as partial cash payment, at any rate, on materials advanced to them. Furthermore, Jones may advance further funds, provided there is some real evidence that the Soviets can deliver raw materials.⁷⁹

The precise nature of the instructions given to Harriman in this matter are not revealed in any of the available records of his mission. Evidently he received them rather late, whatever they were, for on October 1 he had cabled to Hopkins and Morgenthau that, since he was uninstructed on matters of finance, he had not raised the issue in the course of the Moscow talks.⁸⁰ It seems highly unlikely, in the context of all the accounts of the Moscow meetings which are available, that Harriman would have pressed hard to secure payment in gold. Whatever transpired in discussions of the issue while he was at the Kremlin is not really important. The significant fact is that, in his final report to the President, he made the assertion that "it is impossible for Russia to continue to finance the full program."⁸¹

Another gold transfer agreement was in fact concluded with the Russians in October, but it was arranged in Washington. On September 26 Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau was visited by Gromyko of the Soviet Embassy and Lukashev of Amtorg. They poured out their monetary woes before the Secretary. Although Jesse Jones had promised another \$10 million advance on October 1, said Gromyko, their needs would exceed \$12 million by October 10, and he estimated that as much as \$150 million might be needed during the balance of the month to make the necessary cash advances on outstanding orders. Morgenthau gave a sympathetic hearing to these difficulties. He told his callers that the President would soon complete long-range plans for financing the program, but pending that he desired them to have the necessary dollar balances. Therefore, said Morgenthau, the Treasury stood ready to purchase a reasonable amount of gold in accordance with the August agreements.⁸²

Following this the arrangements were concluded quickly. It was agreed that \$30 million more would be advanced to the Russians in exchange for further future gold deliveries. At Morgenthau's request,

79. Letter, Hopkins to Henderson, October 15, 1941 (861.24/705).

80. Telegram, Harriman to Hopkins and Morgenthau, October 1, 1941 (Harriman Files).

81. Report on Mission, Harriman to the President, October 29, 1941 (Roosevelt Library, President's Secretary File, Box 15).

82. Telegram, Morgenthau to Harriman, September 26, 1941 (Harriman Files).

word of this was sent by the State Department to Harriman on October 8, and two days later the transaction was completed.⁸³

Previously on October 1, the Defense Supplies Corporation made a \$20 million advance to Amtorg, instead of \$10 million, and most of the balance of the \$50 million total advance agreed upon was forthcoming before the end of the month. By the end of October, the Russians had received cash advances totaling approximately \$90 million—of which \$40 million came from the Treasury on gold pledges and \$50 million from the Defense Supplies Corporation on raw materials purchased for future delivery.⁸⁴ In announcing the advance of October 1, Jones intimated that such arrangements were reaching the limits of their feasibility. He told reporters that, in his opinion, the sensible course was to include Russia within the second lend-lease appropriation. One Washington correspondent hailed this comment as “the first forthright statement by a Roosevelt administration official in support of lease-lend aid for Russia.”⁸⁵ While this was not quite true—Stettinius had a few days earlier told the House Appropriations Committee that he “personally” favored the extension of lend-lease to include Russia—it certainly made a valid point.

CONGRESS UPHOLDS THE RUSSIAN AID PROGRAM

It may be doubted that the President confided the full details of his strategy of dealing with the financial aspects of Soviet aid in anyone other than Hopkins and possibly a few other close associates. At any rate, the Cabinet and the officials in the lend-lease office were aware that lend-lease financing was scheduled for future use, the question being not whether but when. It seemed incumbent upon all to admit of no specific plans for incorporating Russian aid within lend-lease but to oppose without qualification, in speaking in support of the second lend-lease appropriation request, any proviso which would bar Russia from future participation.

Oscar Cox, counsel to the Division of Defense Aid Reports, mapped out the stand that lend-lease officials should take in appearing before the Congressional appropriations committee in a memorandum prepared just as the hearings on the lend-lease measure were about to open. This

83. Telegram, Hull to Winant, October 8, 1941 (861.24/689a); and, Bertram Hulen, *New York Times*, October 21, 1941, p. 1. At the time of announcing the second gold agreement, Morgenthau also revealed that the Russians had already repaid the first Treasury advance of \$10 million, doing so in sixty-five days although allowed ninety.

84. *New York Times*, October 22, 1941, p. 6; and October 23, 1941, p. 4. These arrangements were summarized in a telegram from Hull to Steinhardt on October 21 (861.24/678). Steinhardt had earlier reported that Stafford Cripps was worried over the possibility of a delay in shipments of aid because of inconclusive financial agreements.

85. Wilfrid Fleisher, *New York Herald-Tribune*, October 2, 1941, p. 1.

document made the following points for their guidance: (1) though it was not yet planned to use lend-lease to cover the Soviet aid program, the President should not be hedged in by restrictions since it might become urgently necessary to make use of lend-lease authority; (2) leaving such discretionary power in the Chief Executive's hands was the actual legislative policy determined in the Lend-Lease Act, since Congress at that time rejected proposals to list eligible recipients, and, more specifically, rejected proposals to exclude by name the Soviet Union; and (3) in view of the importance to U.S. interests of maintaining the Russian front, all means of extending aid should be kept available for use.⁸⁶

Such was the position taken by Edward Stettinius as the first executive witness in testimony before the House Committee on Appropriations on September 23. He was asked by Representative George Johnson (D., W.Va.) why Russia was not included in the program and gave this answer:

Lend-Lease aid has not been extended to Russia and while it is not contemplated to extend lend-lease aid to Russia at the present time, the hands of the Chief Executive should not be tied, because it might become urgently and suddenly necessary in our own interest to extend such aid. . . .

Up to the present time Russia has been able to pay for the goods she has purchased in this country from her own funds. . . .

No funds in the present appropriation are programmed for Russia, but we do not believe the President's hands should be tied.⁸⁷

Whenever the subject was brought up anew, Stettinius gave substantially the same reply, adding at one point that he "personally" favored the inclusion of Russia under lend-lease but that such a decision was not his to make.⁸⁸

Later in the week, Secretary of War Stimson reiterated this position, stating that none of the funds requested had actually been programmed for the U.S.S.R. and adding: ". . . I should deem it a very grave error on our part of prudence and wisdom if there should be any restrictions put into the bill with respect to the use of this for Russia, in case it should be necessary."⁸⁹ General Marshall spoke to the same point, emphasizing the great importance of the Russian front by remarking that "whatever we do to keep the Russian army in the field aggressively resisting the Ger-

86. Memorandum by Oscar Cox, "Policy of Aid to Russia," September 23, 1941 (Harriman Files).

87. House, Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, *Hearings on the Second Supplemental National Defense Appropriation Bill for 1942* (77th Cong., 1st Sess., 1941), Part I, pp. 13-14.

88. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

89. Testimony of September 29, *ibid.*, p. 296.

mans is to our great advantage. It would increase the chances of a successful end to the war, it would hasten the early conclusion."⁹⁰

The temper displayed by members of the House Appropriations Committee during the course of these hearings was one that could only be described as distinctly favorable to the provision of aid to Russia. Congressmen Lambertson (R., Kans.), an arch-isolationist, and Ditter (R., Pa.), a more moderate exponent of isolationism, questioned witnesses on the subject of Russia but did not state any criticism of the aid program. Lambertson seemed concerned only to get an admission that lend-lease help was intended.⁹¹ The Democrats on the Committee made it clear that they supported the program. Johnson of West Virginia, who displayed particularly keen interest in the question of aiding Russia, phrased his comments and inquiries in such manner as to put the importance of the Russian front to American security in sharp focus. He attempted to secure an admission from Stimson that if Germany were defeated in Russia the victory over Germany was won and even suggested:

If our help to Russia is going to mean anything we had better make some sacrifices here, if that is necessary to help Russia, and if that would mean fewer people to be trained in the Regular Army for the next few months, do you not think that would be a good idea?⁹²

Stimson answered only that a German defeat in Russia would be a "serious blow" for Hitler and that everything reasonable was being done to rush supplies to the U.S.S.R.

The best indication of the Committee's views came in the report submitted at the time the lend-lease bill was sent to the House. Referring to the comments of Stettinius, Stimson, and Marshall, the report asserted:

If the President, in the exercise of his powers under the Lend-Lease Act and under the scope of the authority vested in him in the allocation of the appropriations now recommended, should find that assistance to Russia should be made in the interest of shortening the war and thereby rendering our own defense more secure, the committee feels that such action would be no breach of the use of the funds even though they had been premised upon a use for other nations. Nothing would be more discouraging to the morale of the Russian Government and the Russian people in their heroic and surprising resistance to Axis conquest than to hear that the President of the United States was precluded from rendering aid to them should he find it possible and expedient to do so with these funds. . . .⁹³

90. *Ibid.*, p. 333.

92. *Ibid.*, pp. 298-99.

93. Committee on Appropriations, *Second Supplemental National Defense Appropriation Bill, 1942*, H. Rp. 1230, 77th Cong., 1st Sess. (1941), p. 7.

91. See *ibid.*, pp. 26-33.

The President could not have asked for more than this.

By this time the reports of an impending amendment which would attempt to exclude Soviet Russia from lend-lease had elicited a definite response from influential Congressional leaders, who, for the first time, began to speak out on the subject of Russian aid in explicit terms. Speaker Rayburn said that any such proviso as that intended by Day and Fish would be "most unfortunate" and warned that it would "weaken Russian morale" at a critical moment.⁹⁴ Chairman Bloom of the Foreign Affairs Committee voiced the opinion that Congress was "committed" to the aid of any nation fighting Germany, which included Russia as well as Britain.⁹⁵ Senator George, chairman of the Finance Committee, branded such an amendment as irresponsible, adding that it would be "a vital mistake for the Congress of the United States to exclude any country that is willing and able to stand up and fight against Germany."⁹⁶

A forceful indication of the gathering strength behind the Russian aid policy came in the House during the first week of October—just at the time when a storm was raging around the President's remarks pertaining to Article 124 of the Soviet Constitution. The occasion was a debate on H.R. 5667, a bill providing for an increase of \$1.5 billion in the lending capacity of the RFC. Sponsors of the measure tried to have it placed under unanimous consent procedure, but House isolationists blocked the attempt, obviously maneuvering to force a full legislative examination of the Russian aid program. Hamilton Fish rose to say that the bill warranted ample debate at least "to disclose the nature and extent of aid to be given to Communist Russia," whereupon Congressman Robert F. Jones (R., Ohio) made formal objection to the unanimous consent motion.⁹⁷

On October 7, when the bill was brought before a half-filled House of Representatives for debate, Congressman Frederick Smith, inveterate critic of collaboration with Soviet Russia, introduced an amendment stating: "Provided, no part of this authorization shall directly or indirectly be made available as a loan to the U.S.S.R." Smith warned that the nation was approaching "national bankruptcy" and stated that, if it were a matter of policy to aid communist Russia, "then Congress should be forthright enough to pass a measure which specifically provides for this." He added: "I am not in favor of giving away the money of American taxpayers to aid the Communist regime in Russia."⁹⁸

94. Turner Catledge, *New York Times*, September 22, 1941, p. 3.

95. Robert C. Albright, *Washington Post*, September 25, 1941, p. 1.

96. James B. Reston, *New York Times*, September 21, 1941, p. 27.

97. *New York Herald-Tribune*, October 3, 1941, p. 9.

98. *Congressional Record*, LXXXVII, 7702.

The Ohio Republican found himself in an uncomfortable position. No one else spoke in defense of the amendment, and others refused to take it seriously. Congressmen Scrugham (D., Nev.) and Gore (D., Tenn.) professed uncertainty as to what the initials "U.S.S.R." represented, Scrugham asking if Smith had intended to exclude the "United States Senate Restaurant" from the bounty of the RFC. Smith angrily commented upon the facetious approach of his colleagues to matters of utmost importance, and Patman (D., Tex.), who was managing the debate, insisted that Smith be allowed to make the wording more specific in order for the issue to "be plain and direct as to whether or not this House is in favor of helping Russia." Patman personally hoped that the RFC would be enabled to loan substantial funds to the Soviet Union. Five other Democrats voiced the same sentiment, Gosset (Tex.) asking if it were "not better to loan money to Russia than to give blood to Hitler," and Spence (Ky.) observing that he deemed it far better to "let American dollars do the fighting than to have American manhood do it." A vote was promptly taken, and, on a division, the Smith amendment was defeated sixty-nine to twenty-five.⁹⁹

The day following this, October 8, the House began debates on the second lend-lease appropriation bill. From the beginning, it appeared that the opposition to the bill itself was only nominal and that even the much-discussed amendment to exclude the Soviet Union commanded almost no support. Hamilton Fish early inquired if the committee testimony indicated what funds, if any, had been set aside for Russia, and was told by Clarence Cannon (D., Mo.) that while none had been so designated there was nothing to preclude the President from making such use of some portion of the money. Reed (R., N.Y.) then asked if, in the light of the agreements reached at Moscow, Russia was not to be aided from lend-lease funds, then from what sources was the program to be financed. Cannon merely answered that the committee had not taken that matter up and again pointed out that the President could put Russia under lend-lease if he deemed it advisable.¹⁰⁰ This provoked Congressman Lambertson, the Kansas isolationist, to voice the opinion that if no one else would move to delete the enacting clause of the measure he would be glad to do so, and, in designating the reasons for his opposition to the bill, he stated:

There is another thing about this bill I do not like, and that is the fact the testimony shows that everyone has insisted this is not the Russian bill, when everyone knows it is. The leaders who testified stated that this is not for

99. *Ibid.*, pp. 7702-3.

100. *Ibid.*, pp. 7718-19.

Russia, but they were just as insistent at the same time that there be no provision placed against Russia in the bill. They told us, "Leave it to the President to use his own judgment as he sees fit for our national defense." . . .

I do not like that sort of subterfuge. We have had it from the beginning and from the time the first steps were taken when we lifted the embargo. . . . We know this is for Russia.¹⁰¹

Congressman Sauthoff (Prog., Wis.) expressed the same sentiment.¹⁰²

Clifton Woodrum (D., Va.) answered by saying that, despite the antipathy he held for the Soviet system of government, he saw no alternative but to give the U.S.S.R. all aid available. Since Russia had been the only power with an army capable of stopping the Germans, he said, he hoped that the President would give prompt and effective lend-lease aid to the U.S.S.R.¹⁰³

The second day of debate witnessed further indications of the lack of support for excluding Russia. Hamilton Fish delivered a long speech severely castigating the President for attempting to picture Russia as recognizing freedom of religion, but this was the principal burden of his remarks. When he turned to the question of American aid to Russia, he made this interesting comment: "If lend-lease funds are to be made available to godless Soviet Russia, it must be exclusively on military grounds—that Stalin is fighting Hitler and the Communist Army the Nazi Army."¹⁰⁴

There were few among the administration's strongest supporters who were willing to take issue with that reasoning. Even Robsion (R., Ky.), a confirmed isolationist who had seldom passed an opportunity to attack Soviet Russia, confessed to "mixed emotions" on the Russo-German war and admitted that he hoped the Russians would win since he favored a British over a German victory. With reference to aiding Russia, he had little to say, except that Russia might some day use such aid to crush Poland and the Baltic states.¹⁰⁵

Nevertheless, the hard core of opposition to Soviet aid was determined to press its attack. On October 10 Congressman Robert Rich (R., Pa.), whose record of opposition to the foreign policies of the Roosevelt administration was without exception, formally introduced the long expected amendment. He asked the House to incorporate into the bill this clause: "*Provided*, That no part of the funds contained in this [defense aid] section shall be used to aid the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics." It was agreed that thirty-four minutes should be allowed for debating the

101. *Ibid.*, p. 7734.

103. *Ibid.*, p. 7763.

105. *Ibid.*, p. 7790.

102. *Ibid.*, p. 7739.

104. *Ibid.*, p. 7791.

proposal. Rich spoke rather briefly, the burden of his argument being placed upon ideological considerations. He assailed Soviet persecution of religion and the whole pattern of totalitarian rule in Russia, asserting that the time had come for the American people to speak out against giving aid to "communistic and socialistic countries."¹⁰⁶ Other than Rich, only two other members spoke in support of the amendment. They were Robert Jones (R., Ohio) and Day (R., Ill.).¹⁰⁷

Eight Democrats used the remainder of the time to speak against the amendment—O'Neal (Ky.), Colmer (Miss.), Cox (Ga.), Faddis (Pa.), Randolph (W.Va.), Woodrum (Va.), McCormack (Mass.) and Magnuson (Wash.). While some of them paid tribute to the valor and determination of the Russians, most of them put heavy emphasis upon the "realist" thesis—that national security necessitated aiding any nation fighting Nazi Germany. Colmer, whose speech was the principal one, made this comment:

Why are we raising a religious issue upon a proposition where we have set out to gain a certain objective. . . . I loathe it [the "Russian doctrine of government"]; but does the gentleman from Pennsylvania contend for one moment that Hitlerism permits freedom of religion or freedom of worship? We have set out to destroy Hitlerism. Who is destroying Hitlerism today? It is the people of Russia. Who is making the fight; whose backs are against the wall today in the fight against Hitlerism? It is Russia. . . .

I say, with all due deference to the English people, I wish the English people today would heed the call from Moscow and put up the same kind of a fight that the Russian people are putting up to stop Hitler. As far as I am concerned, I would be agreeable to see this lend-lease money go to Russia, the people who are really putting up a fight to stop Hitlerism. Now let us not be misled. Let us not start on some extraneous issue. . . . Let us keep our eyes on the main objective and permit any part of this money to go to people who are really putting up a fight at this time.¹⁰⁸

Cox, the Georgia conservative, agreed that the administration had tried to create the impression that none of the money was going to be used for Russia when every "informed person" knew that it was, and he agreed that there were "dangers involved in making common cause with Russia." He stated that he personally thought that communism had made serious and dangerous inroads into American life and government. However, he concluded with the assertion: "We are and will continue to aid Russia because she is on our side. I have no interest in her survival except

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 7820.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7820.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 7822-23.

that she may be used to help crush the bloodiest tyrant that has ever cursed the world."¹⁰⁹

Woodrum urged his colleagues to recognize that "approval or disapproval of internal conditions in Russia" was not at issue.¹¹⁰ Then, Representative John Taber, ranking Republican member of the Appropriations Committee, made this terse statement on the Rich amendment:

I feel obliged to say to the membership of the House that I think it would be very unfortunate if this amendment should be adopted. I have no use for Soviet Russia and its form of government, but I do not think it would be wise to say at this time that we will not permit the President to handle materials that are provided in such a manner as the military chieftains of our country might advise.¹¹¹

The correspondent of the *Chicago Tribune*, watching the proceedings from the gallery, commented that Taber's remarks were the prelude to a complete collapse of the opposition to Russian aid.¹¹² When, a few minutes later the amendment was brought to a vote, the supporters of the Rich amendment found themselves literally overwhelmed. On a division, only 21 "ayes" were recorded, against 162 "nays."¹¹³

A short time after this, the House listened politely while Mrs. Rogers (R., Mass.) introduced an amendment barring the use of any of the funds provided for the benefit of "any foreign country in which there is a law or decree prohibiting free exercise of religion." By a voice vote, this was easily defeated,¹¹⁴ and then, on a roll call, the second lend-lease appropriation bill passed the House, on October 10, 1941, by a vote of 328 to 67.¹¹⁵

Following this debacle in the House, no attempt was made in the Senate to exclude Soviet Russia from the benefits of lend-lease. During the Senate hearings on October 14 inquiries were made as to whether any provision had been made for Russia in drawing up the appropriation request, and the answer given was identical to those made before the House committee. It should be stressed that, in saying none of the funds being sought had been programmed for the U.S.S.R., the administration spokesmen were speaking the literal truth. Passed over in silence, how-

109. *Ibid.*, p. 7822.

110. *Ibid.*, p. 7823.

111. *Ibid.*

112. Willard Edwards, *Chicago Tribune*, October 11, 1941, p. 1.

113. *Congressional Record*, LXXXVII, 7823. Langer and Gleason in *The Undeclared War*, p. 818, erroneously state that the amendment was defeated by a vote of "217-162." They also comment that the "Senate took like action." As will be shown, no such amendment was brought before the Senate. Their account, therefore, leaves a very distorted impression of the strength of the opponents of Soviet aid.

114. *Congressional Record*, LXXXVII, 7825.

115. *Ibid.*, pp. 7839-40.

ever, was the need for using the "Billion Three" clause to procure military items for the U.S.S.R. But at no point in the hearings did any member of the Senate Appropriations Committee voice any opposition to using a part of the funds to be appropriated to finance Soviet aid.¹¹⁶

On the floor of the Senate, when the lend-lease appropriation was briefly debated on October 23, the Russian issue was mentioned only in passing. Senator Chavez (D., N. Mex.) read a letter from one John D. McCall of Dallas, Texas, discussing the repudiated Russian debts held by American citizens. Chavez stated that he did not bring up the matter in order to argue against lend-lease aid to Russia but only to state that he believed it was proper that the matter be brought to the attention of the Soviet government so that future negotiations on the subject could be arranged.¹¹⁷ Senator Adams (D., Colo.), who managed the debate, remarked at one point that he had been advised that Russia was expected to continue to finance her own purchases as long as she was able, but both he and Senator Lucas (D., Ill.) stated that the President was free to use lend-lease funds to aid the U.S.S.R. if he deemed it to be necessary.¹¹⁸ After a very brief debate, the lend-lease appropriation passed the Senate that same day by a vote of fifty-nine to thirteen.¹¹⁹ Despite all the outcries against aid for Russia that had been made since June 22, when the issue was confronted in Congress the opponents of such a policy were an insignificant minority. In the House, they had been voted down by an eight-to-one majority. In the Senate, the policy was virtually passed over in silence, as if aid to Russia could be taken for granted.

THE LEND-LEASE DECISION

Armed with this resounding triumph in Congress, President Roosevelt was free to proceed as he saw fit to insure the provision of adequate funds for the Soviet aid program. Harriman arrived in the U.S. just as the Senate was preparing to debate the lend-lease appropriation measure and conferred at Hyde Park with the President and Hopkins on October 20. In his public statements, and in his report to the President, he expressed the fullest confidence that Russia would fight on but stressed the great importance of prompt deliveries of American supplies to insure the effectiveness of the Soviet defense. With reference to the question of finance, he wrote to the President in his formal report of October 29 that:

116. For the discussion of Russia in the Senate Committee on Appropriations, see its *Hearings on H.R. 5788, Second Supplemental National Defense Appropriation Bill for 1942*, 77th Cong., 1st Sess. (1941), pp. 19-21, 32-35.

117. *Congressional Record*, LXXXVII, 8200-1.

118. *Ibid.*, pp. 8178-79.

119. *Ibid.*, p. 8209. The bill was signed by the President on October 28.

... it is impossible for Russia to continue to finance the full program. In addition, there are practical reasons of procedure making the use of the lend-lease mechanism most desirable. It is recommended that the use of lend-lease funds be authorized at the earliest moment possible.¹²⁰

With all domestic obstacles to Russian aid successfully surmounted, the President moved with haste to act upon this recommendation. That same day—October 29—Hopkins was entrusted with the task of drafting a cable to Stalin stating the American proposals for financing the aid program. As sent to Stalin over the President's signature on October 30, the message summarized the action taken on the Supply Protocol and continued:

In an effort to obviate any financial difficulties immediate arrangements are to be made so that supplies up to one billion dollars in value may be effected under the Lend-Lease Act. If approved by the Government of the U.S.S.R. I propose that the indebtedness thus incurred be subject to no interest and that payments by the Government of the U.S.S.R. do not commence until five years after the war's conclusion and be completed over a ten-year period thereafter. . . .¹²¹

The provision of lend-lease funds in the form of a credit, it should be noted, was an exceptional practice, but one which was taken to accommodate the specific requests of the Soviet government.

Hopkins made this comment on the message:

This telegram represents the President's decision to put the Russians under Lend-Lease. There has been an endless amount of discussion about that for some weeks and it has become more and more clear that this is the only technique to finance their purchases. Yesterday [October 29] I consulted both Morgenthau and Hull about it and they were agreeable to the contents of the wire, which I drafted this morning and the President has since cabled it. . . .¹²²

On November 4 Stalin wrote in reply to the President that the proposal was "accepted with sincere gratitude by the Soviet Government as unusually substantial aid in its difficult and great struggle against our common enemy, bloodthirsty Hitlerism."¹²³

The Soviet Embassy filed at the White House, on the morning of November 7, the declarations required under sections four and seven of

120. Harriman to the President, October 29, 1941 (Roosevelt Library, President's Secretary File, Box 15).

121. The Department of State released a paraphrase of the message on November 6. It is in the *Department of State Bulletin*, V (1941), 365-66.

122. Quoted in Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp. 396-97.

123. *Department of State Bulletin*, V (1941), 366.

the Lend-Lease Act.¹²⁴ The President issued that same day a directive to Edward Stettinius, the head of the newly created Office of Lend-Lease Administration, in which he stated:

In accordance with that pledge and pursuant to the power conferred upon me by the Lend-Lease Act, I have today found that the defense of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is vital to the defense of the United States. I therefore authorize and direct you to take immediate action to transfer defense supplies to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics under the Lend-Lease Act and to carry out the terms of my letter of October 30 to Premier Stalin. . . .¹²⁵

THE COLLAPSE OF THE OPPOSITION TO THE SOVIET AID PROGRAM

So it was that in the short space of four and one half months after Germany unleashed its war against Soviet Russia, the U.S. was formally committed to the provision of a \$1 billion aid program to Russia. As if to make the circle complete, the Kremlin announced on that same November 7 that it had appointed Maxim Litvinov as the Ambassador to the U.S.

In several quarters the announcement of the lend-lease decision was ill-received. Senator Gerald P. Nye remarked to reporters: "What a long way we have come since we passed the lease-lend bill. Then it was to aid democracy. Now here we are giving Brother Joe one billion smackers, and no ifs, ands or buts about it." Senator David I. Walsh expressed deep misgivings about the announcement.¹²⁶ The *Chicago Tribune* accused the President of deliberate deception in his handling of the matter and contended that much of the money would be used by American Communists "to further their revolutionary designs."¹²⁷ The *Commercial and Financial Chronicle* reflected upon the magnitude of the sum and found the decision somewhat "alarming."¹²⁸ Archbishop Beckman of Dubuque had hurled one more thunderbolt against any program of aid to Russia as Congress was considering the lend-lease appropriation,¹²⁹ and the ultra-conservative Allied Patriotic Societies declared their unremitting opposition during the same month.¹³⁰

Still, in the light of the vehemence with which aid to Russia had been attacked since June 22, the reaction of the President's opponents to the

124. These involved a pledge by all recipients of lend-lease aid that materials received would not be re-transferred except by consent of the President and that patents held by American citizens would be safeguarded.

125. *Department of State Bulletin*, V (1941), 366-67.

126. *New York Times*, November 7, 1941, p. 13.

127. November 8, 1941, p. 12.

128. November 13, 1941, p. 1036.

129. *New York Times*, October 20, 1941, p. 4.

130. *Congressional Record*, LXXXVII, 7614.

Russian decision was mild indeed. No isolationist members of Congress, except Nye and Walsh, volunteered any discussion of the decision, and most striking of all was the fact that Senator Burton K. Wheeler specifically "declined to comment."¹³¹ Herbert Hoover, in a major foreign policy address to the Union League Club of Chicago on November 19, made no mention whatsoever of American aid to the Soviet Union.¹³²

It is appropriate at this point to examine the factors which seem to account for the conspicuous absence of opposition to the President's decision. Strictly speaking, the battle was over by October 23 when the lend-lease appropriation bill emerged from Congress by heavy majorities and with the Rich amendment resoundingly voted down. This complete failure of the opposition to Soviet aid to make a showing of strength in Congress was a remarkable development. There can be little doubt that, as Representative Cox expressed it, every "informed person" expected that Russia would be one of the principal beneficiaries of the lend-lease appropriation. The administration had certainly made no straight-forward presentation of its plans for financing Russian aid, but it was equally true that no determined attempt to ascertain the financing arrangements was actually made in either house. Despite the long heritage of animosity toward Soviet Russia, and despite the fact that this animosity was strongly entrenched in Congress, when the issue of using lend-lease funds for assisting the U.S.S.R. was placed before the House of Representatives it was given an apathetic reception; and, in the end, the opposition to such a policy commanded no significant strength. In the Senate, lend-lease for Russia was not even challenged.

It is true, of course, that the issue arose in Congress in conjunction with a debate over the appropriation of funds with which to continue the lend-lease program, not with the consideration of the program *de novo*. At the same time, when it is recalled how bitter had been the opposition to the Lend-Lease Bill earlier that same year and how assiduously the opponents of the bill had demanded that Britain offer every proof of its financial need, the ease with which lend-lease for Communist Russia was accepted certainly represented an amazing contrast.

The President had disarmed some sources of opposition to his lend-lease program late in that summer by ostensibly removing Harry Hopkins from any direct connection with the lend-lease office. Edward R. Stettinius was named as director of the program, and Congress was informed of

131. *New York Times*, November 8, 1941, p. 12.

132. *Ibid.*, November 20, 1941, p. 1. Wheeler did, on November 6, pour out his sarcasm against the administration's support of Russia against Finland and even charged that communists and Wall Street were together leading the nation to war. But of the billion dollar loan, he said nothing. *Congressional Record*, LXXXVII, 8547-48.

this when it began consideration of the second lend-lease appropriation bill.¹³³ Among conservatives in Congress this was a welcome step, for most of them deeply distrusted Harry Hopkins.

In addition, many isolationists may have felt, in view of the actions taken already by the administration regarding Russia, and in view of the strong support for these actions evidenced by Democratic leaders in Congress, that there was little point in trying to reverse the course of developments. At the same time, the likelihood of defeat had seldom prevented isolationists in Congress from taking a determined stand in opposition to Roosevelt's actions.

Such factors as these, while undoubtedly present, seem inadequate to account for the ease with which the lend-lease appropriation bill was enacted and for the debacle which overtook those who attempted to bar Soviet Russia from the lend-lease program. A more plausible, and more fundamental explanation, would seem to be that, to interventionists and most isolationists, the continuation of Russo-German hostilities had come to offer certain definite advantages.

By October of 1941 the war in Europe appeared to be drawing much closer to America. On September 11 the President made his "shoot-on-sight" speech, after the encounter on the North Atlantic between the destroyer *Greer* and a German submarine. Early in October he had asked Congress to repeal portions of the Neutrality Act, and the publicity attending the lend-lease debates during that month was overshadowed by the neutrality issue. On October 17 a second incident occurred in the Atlantic, leading to an attack on the destroyer *Kearny*. The responsibility for these incidents and the accuracy or lack of accuracy with which the administration represented them are not germane to this study. The point is that the confluence of events was pointing toward a greater likelihood of U.S. involvement in the war. And these events were accompanied by increasing tensions in the Far East.

For interventionists the maintenance of the Russian front assumed ever-increasing importance. If American involvement were inevitable, the destruction of Russia would only mean that an ally had been lost. If Russia and Britain could continue the fight, then there was the possibility that Germany might be brought to its knees with the aid of American supplies, but without the commitment of an American Army. This was why so many interventionists in Congress, who knew the isolationist taunt that the President could not obtain a declaration of war from

133. See the discussion of Hopkins in House of Representatives, Committee on Appropriations, *Hearings on the Second Supplemental National Defense Appropriation Bill for 1942*, 77th Cong., 1st Sess., Pt. 1, pp. 6ff.

Congress was more than a mere boast, were so willing to send "American dollars" into the fight against Germany. Dollars, even if sent to Soviet Russia, were a far more palatable contribution than an American Army.

This logic was not lost on the isolationists. The primary concern of the leaders of this movement was to prevent American involvement. They were, consequently, far more concerned during the fall of 1941 with the questions of Neutrality Act amendment and with the naval incidents on the Atlantic than with the question of aid to Russia. Aid to Russia was a price many of them seemed willing to pay if it would help to stave off the far greater evil of American belligerency. This was why Alfred M. Landon could say in a radio broadcast on October 17 that America both "desired" and "needed" Russia's success.¹³⁴ It was why Herbert Hoover in his speech of November 20 fervently appealed for a calm attitude toward the international situation. His overriding concern was in fighting against an alleged trend toward a war psychology, which could only culminate, he warned, in the dispatch of an AEF.¹³⁵

At the basis of Hoover's call for national composure was the thesis that the nation faced no immediate peril and that Britain was safe against attack—at least temporarily. Hoover and other proponents of this contention well knew that its plausibility was directly dependent upon the continuation of the war in Russia. Political strategy and political conviction pointed to the unwisdom of an assault upon the decision to supply Communist Russia with American aid.

PUBLIC APPROVAL OF THE AID DECISION

To remain silent on aiding Russia was a bitter, if not indigestible, pill for most isolationist spokesmen to swallow. The fact was, however, that they accepted it. In the final analysis it was the eddy of circumstances that swept them into tacit agreement with interventionists on this issue. Representative John Taber, an eminent conservative whose voting record was almost evenly divided in support and opposition for the principal foreign policy proposals of the President during 1939-41, probably spoke the feelings of both camps when he asked during the lend-lease appropriation debate: "Is not the meat of this situation that unless such needed assistance is given as promptly as possible to Great Britain and the rest of the crowd that is fighting Hitler we will have to do the job all alone?"¹³⁶ All interventionists could agree that this was the case. Isolationists did not believe that American security compelled hostilities against Hitler,

134. *New York Times*, October 18, 1941, p. 4.

135. *Ibid.*, November 20, 1941, p. 1.

136. *Congressional Record*, LXXXVII, 7765.

unless he forced it, but they were clearly apprehensive that this statement summarized the whole trend of recent developments. To battle against aid to Russia was left only a die-hard minority, represented in Congress to a large extent by those who, from whatever motives, were more pre-occupied with alleged domestic inroads of communism than with any other issue.

There is every evidence that the American public was in sympathy with the decision to aid the Soviet Union. This was indicated in October by the fact that the national convention of the American Federation of Labor had resolved that "all material assistance possible" should be sent to the U.S.S.R.¹³⁷ A Fortune Poll that month reported this response to a group of alternative policies toward the U.S.S.R.:¹³⁸

Leave Russia strictly alone and give her no help or encouragement of any kind	13.5%
Work along with Russia and give her some help if we think it will help beat Hitler	51.4
Accept Russia as full partner along with England in the fight against Hitler	21.9
Don't know	13.2

In the nation's press there was outspoken endorsement during these weeks for rushing supplies to the Soviet Union. Alan Barth's intensive study of editorial opinion during September and October concluded that the policy of aid to Russia commanded "the support of a heavy majority of newspapers throughout the United States."¹³⁹

The *Baltimore Sun*, for example, editorialized during the lend-lease debate of October: "If we were to vote against aid to Russia, we should, in effect, be inviting Hitler to make himself strong against the Soviets and in the Near East so that he can turn next year and fight more effectively against those we have promised to help in the West."¹⁴⁰ The *Washington Post* congratulated the House of Representatives for defeating the amendment to exclude Russia from lend-lease.¹⁴¹ The *Richmond Times-Dispatch* spoke of aid to Russia as "the prime Allied task of the coming winter."¹⁴²

The evidence is that the decision of November 7 to place Soviet Russia under the provisions of the lend-lease program was one taken with

137. *New York Times*, October 17, 1941, p. 12.

138. Cantrill (ed.), *Public Opinion, 1935-1946*, p. 870.

139. Memorandum, Alan Barth to Oscar Cox, "Editorial Opinion on Aid to Russia," October 29, 1941.

140. Quoted *ibid.*

141. October 12, 1941, Sec. II, p. 6.

142. October 19, 1941, p. 6.

ample public support. There was a great deal of criticism of the President's efforts to "whitewash" the Soviet Union, as many interventionists expressed it; the press and Congress preferred to rest the case on grounds of military expediency and political realism. Yet there was a general consensus as to the wisdom of the aid program.

And thus was determined the policy of the U.S. toward the Soviet Union during the world crisis of 1941. The alliance that was "strange" and was to become "grand" had been forged.

XI.

Conclusions

THE DECISION of the U.S. to provide lend-lease assistance to Soviet Russia in 1941 resulted from the interaction of domestic political forces and considerations of military necessity. There is almost universal agreement that pure military expediency was a controlling factor in determining the President's policies toward the Soviet Union in 1941 and that American policy was definitely determined by the President. A German victory in Russia, or a separate Soviet-German peace, would have been a disaster for the West. It would have left the Eurasian land mass under a German hegemony, virtually nullifying the effects of the British blockade. It would have given added impetus to Japanese expansionist tendencies and would have enabled a German-Japanese juncture in Asia. The entire Middle East and all of Asia would have been opened to the inroads of Axis military power. Britain would have stood alone once again, with its morale impaired by the magnitude of such a disaster.

If American power had been fully mobilized and committed against the Axis in 1941 these consequences of a German conquest of Russia, or of a Russian capitulation, would have been grave enough. But American power was not mobilized, and American power was not fully committed in the summer and fall of 1941. Here the forces of domestic politics thrust themselves upon the foreign policy scene with compelling authority.

American opinion was widely divided on the issues of war and peace in 1940-41. The climate of public opinion was characterized by a general recognition of the wisdom of working for a German defeat and by a parallel belief that the U.S. should strive to keep out of war. At the same time, the President, his ranking civil advisers, and U.S. military establishment accepted as the controlling premise of national policy the concept that the defeat of Germany was the paramount requirement for American security. Out of this milieu of opinion and policy concepts came the

policy of "aid short of war," consolidated in the enactment of the Lend-Lease Bill on March 11, 1941. But "aid short of war," to the President, marked the permissible limits of action in defense of American interests, unless and until the Axis powers provided the *casus belli* which would rally American opinion for a declaration of war. Roosevelt may have erred in this estimate of public opinion. Some of his key advisers believed that, had he chosen to do so, he might have overcome much of the resistance to American involvement. However, such incidents as the vote on military service extension that August and the heated debate over the Neutrality Act amendments that fall must have added powerfully to his conviction that "aid short of war" was the only feasible policy. The possibility cannot be excluded that Roosevelt came to believe—or to hope—that with Russia's armies in the war the "aid short of war" policy would be sufficient to underwrite a British and Soviet victory over Nazi Germany, without direct American involvement.

In any event, conjoined with the military crisis which the German attack on Russia precipitated was the equally important fact that Roosevelt felt unable—regardless of whether he felt it necessary—to make a direct commitment of American power at that juncture. Certainly in view of the vehemence with which his domestic critics asserted that the German-Soviet conflict was final proof that America should remain aloof from the war in Europe, he saw no basis for interpreting the new situation—however dangerous from a military standpoint—as permitting him to embark upon more drastic steps in support of Britain. Here then were the mainsprings of American policy toward Soviet Russia in 1941. Here were the factors which prompted the President's decision to send all possible aid to Russia. For in aiding Russia he was able to proceed within the framework of established policy. This is the most outstanding fact about the impact of domestic political considerations upon the shaping of American policy toward the Soviet Union.

For a time it seemed open to question whether Russian aid could be fitted into the consensus in favor of aiding the enemies of Germany. There were, initially, many indications that the public would not countenance a policy of assistance to a totalitarian power which it deeply distrusted and toward which it harbored great hostility. This compelled the President to form his policies with care and caution, to hedge and improvise for many weeks. Yet, in the final analysis, there was a conspicuous absence of determined opposition to the decision to aid Soviet Russia. Fundamentally, the explanation for this would seem to lie in the fact that, in providing such aid, the President kept within the bounda-

ries of the "aid short of war" consensus. Accordingly, to the extent that he focused his energies upon assisting the Soviet Union, the President was proceeding along lines of relatively less resistance. The longer the Russians held out and maintained a front capable of absorbing a major proportion of German military power, the longer the President could postpone a reckoning upon the ultimate issue of direct American involvement. Ideological conflict and even the heritage of the ill-famed Nazi-Soviet pact and the Soviet war on Finland in 1939-40 were of far less significance to the goals of American policy—in the mind of the President and, apparently, in the mind of the American public—than such considerations as these. The fear of Germany far outweighed the animosity felt toward Soviet Russia, and the valor of the Russian defense itself did much to dissolve American distrust of the Soviet Union.

To say, therefore, that the President's approach to the Soviet Union was based entirely upon grounds of military necessity leaves unexplained some vital aspects of the elements present in this decision. This is certainly not to underestimate the impact of military factors, but domestic political forces vastly augmented the importance of the Russian front to the objectives of national policy and powerfully influenced the whole design of policy toward the Soviet Union.

It is relevant in this connection to say also that these same domestic forces were of great importance in determining the President's method of dealing with the Soviet dictatorship. It has often been argued that Roosevelt's principal error in 1941 was not that he provided aid to the Soviets but that he provided such aid without conditions. It is pointed out that the Soviets were struggling for their lives and that there was no basis for the fears felt in Washington and London that the Russians and Germans might conclude a separate peace. In view of the fact that Roosevelt considered it not possible at that juncture to bring American power directly into play against Germany or Japan, it is understandable that he did not believe his bargaining power was as strong as many of his critics have since depicted it. The fact that such men as Ambassador Steinhardt urged upon him, in the late summer of 1941, the importance of convincing Russia that all possible aid would be given, and advised that this would exercise influence over the shaping of Soviet policies, suggests that in the midst of the crisis of 1941 the spectre of a separate Soviet-German peace did not appear far removed from the realm of the possible.

Since Soviet intentions toward Eastern Europe were generally understood, the President's doubts about imposing conditions were probably

increased. Could he have delivered a point-blank refusal to the Soviet proposals, if the subject of conditions had been raised? Or could he have recognized, for example, Soviet dominion over the Baltic states? The former, he had reason to fear, would have dangerously weakened the coalition against Germany. The latter, he knew, would cause an explosion at home with highly undesirable results. The military crisis and the state of American opinion would seem to have combined to convince Roosevelt that he lacked sufficient bargaining power to embark upon such a course as this.

All this raises the question of the President's attitude toward Soviet ideology and behavior and the future of Soviet-American relations. From the vantage-point of 1941, this question is not easily answered. It suffices here to say that Roosevelt recognized the fact that the Soviet dictatorship was a grim reality. He did not, however, consider it to be anything like the threat that the Nazi dictatorship represented and even seemed to have some fairly strong hopes that the Soviet dictatorship would lessen in severity with the passage of time. He seemed to believe that this process of modification would enable U.S.-Soviet cooperation to continue in future years.¹

Whatever Roosevelt's attitude in 1941 and his beliefs on the subject of future relationships with the Soviet Union, there is one remaining element of great importance which must be recognized as having influence on his determination of American policy. This was the fact that Roosevelt, like most of his contemporaries, underestimated the political and military power of the Soviet Union. In June he wrote to Admiral Leahy, it will be recalled, that he did not believe there was any "need to worry about any possibility of Russian domination" of Europe. At Argentina that August, while discussing post-war international organization for peace, the President and Under-Secretary Welles spoke in terms of the U.S. and Great Britain "policing the world."²

Like most American interventionist spokesmen of the time, Roosevelt seemed to think in terms of American and British power exercising a predominance after the victory over Germany was won. The vast manpower and material losses sustained by the Soviet Union strengthened this belief. Herbert Feis, in recounting the discussions between American and Soviet officials concerning a post-war reconstruction loan to the U.S.S.R., makes this observation on American policy as late as 1944-45:

1. See Roosevelt's comments on this point as reported by Sumner Welles in *Where Are We Heading?* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1946), pp. 36-37; and by Donald M. Nelson in *Arsenal of Democracy: The Story of American War Production* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1946), p. 114.

2. Welles, *Where Are We Heading?* pp. 5-6.

American policy had also been afflicted by a misjudgment. It was thought that Russia would find it very hard to manage after the war without the raw materials, chemicals, electrical and railway equipment that the United States could provide; and that the wish to secure these would induce it to want to keep American good will.³

The nature of Roosevelt's policy decisions, therefore, was probably influenced by his belief that his bargaining power vis-à-vis Stalin in 1941 was considerably less than many of his critics have since construed it to be. This belief was partially a by-product of the domestic political situation which Roosevelt perceived. At the same time, he appears also to have been influenced by the belief that his future bargaining power vis-à-vis Stalin would be considerably greater than in fact it was.

The decision to aid Soviet Russia was a logical culmination of the whole force of direction of American foreign policy in 1940-41, as defined in the lend-lease policy of aid to the opponents of Germany and its Axis associates. The U.S.-Soviet *rapprochement* was a "strange alliance" from its inception, but it fell within what appeared to be the prevailing consensus of the American people at that critical juncture in their history. The decision was made by the President, oftentimes in the face of considerable friction within the executive branch itself, but his policy was deeply rooted in the whole complex of American politics and American public opinion in 1941.

3. Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin*, p. 645.

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- The primary objective held by Britain⁽¹²⁾
and the United States was ~~not~~ the
preservation of a ~~democratic~~ ~~form of~~ government which
provided for the freedom and liberty of
~~its~~ its citizens.



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